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Religious Education in the Home

BY
JOHN D. FOLSOM

METHODIST BOOK CONCERN

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PREFACE

TAKING education as "the systematic development and cultivation of the mind and other natural powers," "Religious Education in the Home" means the systematic development and cultivation, under home influences, of the religious nature of the child. That this is a work of unsurpassed importance is plain to everyone who gives it serious thought. It may be safely asserted that no other method for the propagation of our Christian religion can compare with it. The lack of right home cultivation of the religious life is everywhere felt to be a very serious hindrance to the work of the church. The more the subject is studied the deeper will grow the conviction that in our efforts to lead the young into the religious life we have not begun early enough; that we cannot begin too early; and that we have depended too much on instruction, ignoring some things of much greater importance. That we have been at fault somewhere is clearly evident from the results. One generation of children arises after another, and always the drift of the majority is away from Christ. The Sunday

school cannot hold them; the church cannot reach them. Meanwhile Christianity is at a standstill in many places, and the church is not seldom found to be losing ground, even where the population is increasing. Of course the trouble is not altogether with defective home education, but here is where a large share of it will be found.

A discussion of some of the general principles of a religious education in the home is herewith presented, with intentional brevity, in the hope that it may be helpful to parents, especially to Christian parents, and to pastors, teachers, and others who may have any opportunity or desire to give any direction or encouragement to the religious education of children in the home.

January, 1912.

INTRODUCTION

THE title of this book consists of three of the greatest words in human speech: Religion, Education, Home. Reversing the order of these terms, as their logical relations require, we have the statement of an agency, a process, and an end. The home is the primary and most responsible agency for conducting the religious education of the young. The production of moral and religious character in its members is the highest purpose for which the home exists. And in the fulfillment of this purpose the home must employ the intelligent processes of education.

The first thing is to secure from parents the recognition and acceptance of their responsibility for the religious education of their children. The denial or avoidance of this responsibility is disloyalty to a parent's most primary duty. Parenthood carries with it the obligation for the utmost effort to make possible the achievement of life's essential success by the child for whose coming into the world the parents are responsible. That success must be defined in the terms of the highest range of life, which is moral and religious character. It should be regarded as fundamentally dis-

honorable to bring children into the world and fail to give them that instruction and training necessary for attaining to this highest end of living.

Parents should find encouragement in the thought that there is reasonable certainty of successful outcome to a wisely conducted process of religious education. If they properly and faithfully instruct and train their children in the principles of morality and religion, securing for them wholesome association and environment, availing themselves of all the great and gracious helps provided by the gospel of Christ, there should be very little doubt as to the results. The ancient declaration stands that a child thoroughly trained into the ways and habits of righteousness is not likely to depart from those ways in subsequent years. If parents will employ the proper means they may have strong assurance that they may have the happiness of seeing their children develop into the strength and beauty of Christian character.

Many parents, probably the large majority, are painfully, even discouragingly, conscious of their lack of the qualifications needed for successfully conducting the religious education of their children. This consciousness should lead them to call to their aid those best qualified to help them

in their urgent task. To the limit of their ability parents should themselves direct the moral and spiritual training of their children, never abdicating the place of chief responsibility; but they should be anxious to give their children the benefit of the services of the wisest and the best. The parent's best service to the child may consist in securing for him the instruction and the molding influence of the example of some noble Christian teacher. Let the utmost possible be done through the direct agency of the home; then let the home avail itself of the help of all available allies—the church with its pastors and teachers, the public school, and all special organizations, such as the Young Men's and Young Women's Associations, providing helpful religious advantages and wholesome associations. But the home must be the vital center with which all other agencies are made to coöperate. The child must be made to feel that his religious education has not been transferred from the home, but that his home education is being merely supplemented and strengthened by other agencies. His home should be his holiest sanctuary and in its atmosphere he should find that vital sympathy under which the germs of all good are quickened into growth.

We must frankly recognize that many changes

which have taken place in the social life of our times make impossible the type of Christian home common a few generations ago. The demands of business have become increasingly insistent, leaving less and less leisure and space for the quiet and intimate associations and intercourse of the family circle. A thousand interests are now knocking at the door of the home. The world, constantly growing smaller in the sense that we are being brought into closer and more constant relations with it, in another sense is constantly growing larger in the increasing complexity and the widening latitudes of life's interests and sympathies. This complex, restless, ambitious, challenging world is crowding in more and more closely and strongly upon the seclusion and calm of the home, in which at one time it was easy to find an hour in which the family might worship together without haste, and opportunity for conversation and counsel on the higher interests of life. But if the changed conditions make the old methods impracticable, we must find new methods adapted to the age. The great needs of life have not changed, and therefore religious education will continue to be of permanent and paramount importance.

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CHAPTER I

POSSIBILITIES

By the religious nature of the child we are to understand simply that every normal child is capable of becoming religious, and has natural impulses toward a religious life. That the child has a religious nature is just as apparent as that he has an intellectual nature, and needs no demonstration. That the religious nature may be developed as easily as the intellectual nature, and that its development may begin as early, is not so generally conceded and may require some illustration.

As to the intellectual nature, we are so sure that it is in the child, and that it may be awakened, that we never hesitate a moment to knock at the doors within which the new soul lies dormant to arouse it to a life of thought and of thought expression. We begin ridiculously early, almost as soon as the baby's eyes are open. Everybody is interested, everybody helps, and great is the delight at the first sign of dawning intelligence and at the first spoken word. Then on through months and years, from infancy to manhood, the

efforts are continued for developing, training, strengthening, and perfecting the child's intellectual powers. When viewed at the end of a few months the result seems meager enough. The baby's stock of ideas is yet extremely limited; his thought faculty is feebleness itself, and his power of expression only slightly beyond that of an animal. But slight as the progress seems, it means everything for the child, for it is the beginning and prophecy of a wonderful development of which no one can foretell the end. In such feebleness began the mental activity of the mighty thinkers, teachers, and statesmen of the ages. Take notice that in every instance, if the child is normal, there is entire confidence in the natural capacity for intelligence, which needs only to be awakened, trained, and developed.

Closely analogous to this awakening and developing of the intellect is (or should be) the awakening and developing of the religious nature. Have the same confidence that the little new soul can become religious as that it can become intelligent, then begin as early and proceed as persistently, through infancy to manhood, to awaken, train, develop, and perfect the religious nature, as do the best parents in regard to the child's intellect, and the result is equally sure. (For

the Holy Spirit's coöperation in this work, see Chapter VIII.)

In this process of awakening and development the beginnings will be, as with the intellect, almost too slight to be noticed, and very likely be overlooked, or regarded as of no importance. But though apparently not worth mentioning, these slight beginnings are wonderfully significant, and deserve the most careful attention.

There are two great principles in religion. The first is the sentiment of love, and the second is the sense of right; both are united in the one word "love," when taken broadly, as in "God is love," or "Love is the fulfilling of the law." The birth of love is when the little new soul goes forth to the dear one on whose great heart of love it so confidently reposes. In this tiny budding forth of love we have germinant the vital principle of all true religion. A little later when the baby finds himself, half consciously for the present, under the limitations of law, a sense of right begins to dawn. He begins to learn that some things are to be avoided to save unpleasant consequences, and that some others are sure to win smiling approval. It is, to be sure, but a flickering light glimmering in his little soul, but it is the faint dawning of an illumination that will

grow brighter unto the perfect day, unto the clear daylight of an enlightened conscience, in which he is to walk steadily if he desires to be truly religious. Thus we find appearing in the very morning of life the two great elements of our religion—love and righteousness. Feebly, of course, but what hinders their swift development? Why should not progress in love and righteousness keep even pace with the progress of intelligence? There is no reason in the wide world except parental indifference or incapacity. In other words, cultivate the child's religious life and his intellectual powers together, beginning the one as early as the other, and be as much in earnest with one as the other; this is the normal way, the right, best, safest way. Many can testify to its efficacy. They can never remember the time when they were not Christians; they were brought up in the love and fear of God from birth.

Now, while the cultivation of the child's religious life from his earliest days is the normal and best way, the great majority of children will never receive any such religious cultivation. They are left to grow up and choose for themselves, with the result that a large proportion of them drift through childhood to manhood practically neg-

lectful of their soul's highest interest. Some, indeed, will be saved through the efforts of the church. But what an account will these parents have to render to the Judge for their awful neglect! If, however, the best opportunity has been lost with the passing of early infancy, the parent may yet save his child if he will at last be aroused, and set himself earnestly at work. Not a moment is to be lost. With wise methods and God's gracious help it is comparatively easy to save the five-year-old child; at ten the parent's opportunity is greatly lessened; at fifteen he must call in the help of the church, and then, with all outside assistance possible, bitter experience proves that the chances are more than even that the boy or girl will be lost.

Let us now glance at some of the testimony in favor of the home as the greatest of all evangelizing agencies, and of childhood as every way the best time to awake, train, and develop the religious life.

The advantage of the home influence over the child is that it is earliest on the field. Unnumbered other influences, both for good and for bad, will come later, but the probabilities are that the early home influences will outlast all others and prevail in the end. "A Christian mother," says

W. G. Eliot, "is more to her children in their moral and religious (that is to say, Christian) training than all Sunday schools, churches, preachers, and libraries put together. She alone upon one side, and all the world upon the other, she is most likely to prevail. Let her be heartily a Christian woman, her children are almost sure to be Christian. Add to her influence that of the father; let her gentle persuasions be enforced by his authority, and let both parents thus coöperate with each other, and their children would assuredly grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The facts appear to confirm this statement. It seems that the great majority of those who make public confession of Christ and unite with the church come from Christian homes. It looks as though in the future, even much more than in the past, the Christian home is to be the hope of the church. It may surprise some others as it surprised one pastor to find, by personal investigation and by correspondence with representative ministers of other denominations, that the proportion of church members whose religious life began in Christian homes was eighty per cent of the whole membership. "I would venture to say," says the Rev. Charles M. Sheldon, "that practically all the most eminent church

workers, Sunday school teachers, missionaries, and evangelists, have had their first start toward God and religious things not in the church but in the home."

This evidence of the religious influence of the Christian home is easily verified, and will be found to be amply supported by what everyone can see with his own eyes. It is true that all Christian homes are not alike in religious power. Some, indeed, are only nominally Christian. Not a few have ideals and methods of religious training which are as false, or as unwise, as possible. Comparatively few are the best homes, where right methods of religious education are in use, and where the true spirit of love prevails. In these best homes it is frequently the case that every child follows the religious faith of the parents. Witness the world-famous family of General and Mrs. Booth. Farther back in history was the no less famous family of the rector of Epworth, in which all of the ten children became Christians, and most of them eminent Christian workers. Similar instances are to be found in nearly every community.

The evidence that childhood is the most favorable time in which to cultivate the religious life is strikingly confirmed by the investigations of

Professor Coe and others, which indicate that seven eighths of all those who profess the Christian religion make public confession of Christ before seventeen years of age. In nearly every instance the religious life was actually begun some time (often several years) before public confession was made. And when we remember that, until lately, an early confession of Christ has not only not been encouraged but too often frowned upon, we are led to wonder what might result if childhood religion should everywhere receive the favor it deserves and the attention it needs.

In the "Address of the Bishops" at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1908, Bishop Goodsell says, "Whenever any audience at an Annual Conference is asked to indicate by rising the number who acknowledged Christ before fifteen years of age, two thirds of the congregation will rise." Five sixths of the rest of the congregation will, as he says, testify to confessing Christ between fifteen and eighteen. "The number of those who acknowledged Christ after they are twenty-one is very small." Once while holding Conference at Council Bluffs, Iowa, this bishop is said to have asked all who were converted before they were twelve years of age to rise, and one half the people stood up.

If these are the results when we are only half awake to our obligations to the child, what may we expect when home and church, with a fuller faith in the religion of the child, take up the work in good earnest! The attitude of some ministers reveals itself in their reports of revivals. When "heads of families" are converted much is made of it, but if "nobody started but a few children," it is a plain disappointment. One very small boy joined the church in Scotland. An old elder was considerably disturbed, and in reply to an inquiry whether there had been any additions to the church said, "No one came forward but wee Bobbie Moffat." But "wee Bobbie Moffat" became one of the world's greatest missionaries. Some of the church authorities have even had the hardihood to reject the little ones who have come seeking admission into church fellowship. Said one presiding elder who had applied for admission into the church at ten years of age and been rejected, "I really believe that I was just as good a Christian then as I am now."

A few instances may be given to show that the development of the religious life in childhood is not a mere theory but an actual fact.

At ninety-five years of age Polycarp stated that he had served God eighty-six years, that is, since

a child of nine. Justin Martyr says that many of his time were "made disciples of Christ in childhood, and continued uncorrupted in their lives." John Wesley, who had been brought up by his mother as a child of God from his birth, was admitted to the communion at eight years of age. Jonathan Edwards publicly confessed Christ in his seventh year, Isaac Watts at nine, and Matthew Henry before eleven. Joseph Gregg, who wrote, "Jesus, and shall it ever be," when he was ten years of age, had already "been conquered by love." President William McKinley was a mere boy when he publicly announced his purpose to follow Christ, and to join the church. Dr. Theodore Cuyler could not fix the time or place of his conversion, but says he was led along gradually and grew into a religious life "by the power of the Holy Spirit working through his mother's influence." William Booth, general of the Salvation Army, dates his conversion at fifteen. Henry Drummond was a boy of ten when he began the new life.

The number of the deceased bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church is not large, but among them we find that Hedding first felt the fear of God when about three years old, and began then to live a life of prayer. According

to our mind, he was then a Christian, but he dates his conversion a few years later. Asbury "began reading the Bible between six and seven," and publicly confessed Christ at fourteen. According to D. L. Moody, Simpson was brought to Christ by a godly mother before he was four years old. He could not remember when he was brought into the kingdom. McCabe was converted at eight, Wiley and Andrews at ten, J. O. Andrew, Janes, Clark, and Foster at thirteen, Waugh at fourteen, Baker and Roberts at fifteen. Peck joined the church before sixteen.

If every child comes into the world with a religious nature that may be awakened in the earliest days of infancy, and at once, with proper cultivation and the Spirit's help, may begin its development in the life of love and righteousness, how great is the opportunity of the Christian parent! How great the responsibility resting on every parent! And not on the parents only, but on all who share the home life—relatives residing in the home, servants, visitors, and others who add to or take from the holy influences of the home. There are sometimes influences in the home more potent for good or ill than that of the parent. When a grandmother Lois dwells with a mother Eunice, the religious life of the

young Timothy is doubly well cared for; but a too indulgent or worldly relative in the home destroys much good. The mischief that a nurse or other servant, or casual visitor, may do, unaware to the parent, is a serious matter to consider. But the responsibility for the child's moral and spiritual welfare rests primarily on the parent.

Too often parents are deceived and led away from their parental duties by false teachings or traditions. One such false tradition is that before a child can be expected to become religious he should have "some proper conception of the nature of religion." One may as well say that a child, before he learns his A B C's, should have some proper conception of the nature and value of literary accomplishments.

Perhaps the most common excuse for parental neglect of the child's religious nature is, "The child is too young to understand. It is better to wait until he can think and decide for himself." But often the child understands much more than we think. Moreover, no great amount of intellectual ability is required at the beginning. The child that knows enough to love its mother has already begun an essentially religious life, the life of filial love that is at the foundation of piety,

and that may easily broaden into that universal life of love that includes the heavenly Father and the "neighbor as thyself," and thus fulfills the law.

But can such a little child have any adequate conception of God? Well, for that matter, who has? God's nature is unfathomable. "His ways are past finding out." If the child's idea of God is patterned largely after that of his earthly father, it is about as good an idea of God as many adults have, and is, indeed, good enough for all practical purposes.

Again, it has been assumed that not even a child can become truly religious without passing through a certain prescribed experience. He is to be born again by being first convicted of sin, then by penitence and prayer receive the forgiveness of sins and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. We desire to say not one word against any of these things, but, rather, to commend and emphasize them. Many a child who has reached the years of self-consciousness has passed into the kingdom of life through just such an experience. They were "converted" just as many adults are. But thousands of other Christian people never had any such conversion; they never needed to, being brought up from their very

earliest years in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. "The ideal form of the Christian life," says Dr. Bowne, "is that which never experienced conversion, and which cannot date its beginning." This does not imply that there is in that case no regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, only that it is not begun in an abrupt and marked manner.

It is also asserted by some that the religion of childhood is merely imitative. One writer refers to the religion of the child as "a purely imitative thing, impressed on the life from without by force of discipline, the result of domestic training, but without any vital and spiritual root"—a description that may be true enough in some instances, where wrong methods have been employed, but not true otherwise. Those who have been brought up as the children of God, and never knew themselves to be other than his children, as well as those who sought and found Christ in their childhood days, will testify that their religious life was as real in their childhood as in their later years. There is more to the child than some people think. Have confidence in child piety. Our confidence will win the child's heart and encourage his right purposes, but constant suspicion and underrating of his honest endeavor will breathe on him the chill of death.

It would seem as if parents—above all, Christian parents—would need no persuasion to make the religious training of their children an object of the very first consideration. How thoughtful parents are, how self-denying, when it comes to securing for the child an intellectual training. But when it comes to cultivating love and loyalty to God, high and true moral character, how slow! The danger of delay is startling. It is an awful fact that of the boys and girls now living who received no religious cultivation in infancy the great majority will never make God their choice.

In the chapters that follow we shall consider how the religious nature is to be dealt with to secure the best results; by what methods it can be most easily awakened, cultivated, trained, and brought to the highest perfection of development in the life of the home.

CHAPTER II

ENVIRONMENT

IMAGINE a camera with five lenses, all exposed from morning until night, with a wonderful sensitized plate within, capable of taking impressions continuously, not from light waves alone, but from sounds, touch, taste, and smell, picturing not only the shapes and movements of things, but their inner qualities and meanings. Such a camera is a child, and such a sensitized plate is the child's soul. All day long the outside world flows in through the gateways of the senses and leaves the impress of its likeness on the soul, by which the soul is not only instructed and stimulated but unconsciously transformed. Walt Whitman puts this strikingly in the following lines:

A child went forth every day,
And the first object that he looked upon that object he became;
And that object became part of him for the day, or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years, or stretching cycles of years.
The early lilacs became part of the child,
And grass, and white and red morning glories, and white and red clover, and the song of the Phœbe bird.

Which has the greater influence, environment or heredity? This has been a question of interest in science, and the evidence is strong that in the development of life on earth environment has been the ruling force. It is very certain that it has been the ruling factor in the development of the moral and spiritual life. This is not saying that the influence of environment, and any other influence, may not be superseded by force of will and by the help of the Holy Spirit. Nothing is too strong for the human will reënforced by the Spirit. But we are stating a general truth when we say that it is environment that tells. Given the right religious environment from the beginning of life up through all the years of childhood, we can safely prophesy the result. A forceful illustration is given by Professor John Adams, of the University of London, who says: "A striking confirmation of the newer theories of heredity is to be found in the careful records which the Glasgow municipal authorities have kept of some six hundred and thirty cases of children removed from evil environment while still very young, and sent to the country to be brought up in ordinary families at the expense of the municipality. Of the six hundred and thirty children whose career has been kept under close observation for

years only twenty-three have gone wrong; yet these children came from the worst possible stock." Another authority says, "The reports of the best-managed orphan asylums show that eighty-five per cent of the children placed out under good environment never show any signs of hereditary defects of a moral character, even though their parentage is known to have been immoral, if not actually vicious and criminal."

It is of the highest importance, therefore, that the child should have the right kind of an environment in which to grow up. It should exist in the home if nowhere else. If in the wider life among playmates, in the schools, or elsewhere, he meets another atmosphere, the daily sweet, pure, and holy life in the home will go a long way toward countervailing the evil influences met outside. To the forming of this morally wholesome atmosphere within the home many little things contribute; anything that makes for beauty, neatness, orderliness; anything that gives a right impression or inspiration, or suggests right ideas. Even the color of the wall paper has its effect. A picture on the wall of a ship at sea under full sail made one boy a sailor. Dr. Hervey says he once saw in the Dresden Gallery two children, a brother and sister, one ten and the

other twelve, looking at the Sistine Madonna. "For many minutes they seemed under a spell. They were drinking in something. The great picture was speaking to them—to their very souls." Pictures, whether hanging on the wall, or printed in the child's books, or in the papers and magazines that visit the home, have a singular fascination for children and a powerful influence in molding their lives. Even a bouquet of flowers, preserved for only a few days in a wretched home in one of the tenement houses of New York, had a wonderfully refining influence. A growing plant given to a child and tenderly cared for by her in the one window of her half-underground home in the city slums, brought light and inspiration to that darkened life and into that dismal home.

Then there is the great world of nature—the dancing sunbeam that attracts the baby's rapt attention, the blue sky overhead with its changing cloud displays, the birds' songs, the cricket's chirp. Nature touches the child in a thousand ways, always to help and never to harm. Nature is a great artist that puts enduring pictures in the heart of childhood. In his life and teaching Jesus shows it, shows how from a boy he loved the mountains, the blue sky, the stars, singing

birds, flowers, and the verdant grass. Nature's greatness begets wonder and reverence, its marvels point Godward, its beauty is refining and inspiring, its breadth and freedom exhilarate and strengthen, its quiet is restful and steadying. Wordsworth, in referring to some experience of his childhood, wrote:

> Oh, then the calm
> And dead-still waters lay upon my mind
> Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
> Never before so beautiful, sank down
> Into my heart and held me like a dream.

Wordsworth has much to say of the power of nature to instruct, inspire, strengthen, uplift, and transform his own childish spirit, beginning as early as his sixth year, when "he tended cattle on the hills," and "held intercourse with beauty old as eternity."

> So the foundations of his mind were laid
> In such communings.

He refers to himself as a lad when he says,

> From nature and her overflowing soul
> I received so much, that all my thoughts
> Were steeped in feeling.

Happy are the childish lives so close to nature's heart! Happy for America that so many of her homes are in the country! Happy for the

crowded tenement districts of the city when enlightened public sentiment makes spaces for playgrounds open to the sky, for parks, and growing trees, and flowers, and grassy lawns!

But the great and dominant element of the home environment is the personal one. It is the personal make-up of the home that gives it its charm and power. There is, first of all, the mother. Home is where mother is. Sometimes, indeed, the father takes the precedence, and is always a potent factor in the home. The beliefs, the character, dispositions, daily life, and conversation of father and mother tell on the child's forming life and character more than do all other things combined. The writer knows whereof he speaks, since the beginnings of his own Christian life were under the silent influences of a Christian home, where nothing was said to him directly to persuade him to such a life, no special religious instruction given, but where both father and mother truly lived every day the religious life they had espoused. The religious atmosphere of that home was simply irresistible to the sensitive little souls that breathed it continuously. All of us followed the faith of our parents. It would have been almost a miracle if we had not.

Some little things stand out in memory with

peculiar prominence as having made unusually deep impressions. Many memories, for instance, cluster about the old family Bible, wherein our names were recorded, and wherein, if we were careful, we might occasionally look at its wonderful full-page pictures. The sacred character and authority accorded to it in that Christian home made its very presence impressive, and gathered to it our nascent faith, hopes, religious thought, life, and character. Another influence that worked mightily but "without observation" was the daily family worship, in which all the children took part as soon as they could stumble through a verse of Scripture when their turn came, and the mention made by the dear father of his little ones as we all bowed in prayer. One other thing, very personal to the writer, was when he was rushing through the house, up stairs, on some boyish errand intent, he suddenly became aware of the voice of prayer in one of the rooms. He drew near and found it to be the voice of his mother, who was speaking to God on his behalf. That went deeper into his soul than all the religious instruction he ever received from any source whatever, and in the natural drift years of his life held him like an anchor to his soul, sure and steadfast.

Others have had similar experiences. Pointing to a door leading to a small upstairs room, a young girl said, reverently, "Mother used to go there when she was tired or perplexed, and she always came out with a face as calm as a summer morning." That was better for the young soul that witnessed it than hours of advice on the subject of secret prayer. It is not so much what we say and do when consciously trying to produce an effect, as it is the silent influence of our living as a Christian should, that most lastingly impresses the little ones in our homes. "If anyone should ask me," said Bishop McCabe, who confessed Christ at eight years of age, "what most impressed me in my boyhood days, I would answer, 'The sight of my father coming out from the secret place of prayer every day at noon.'"

The soul of the home is the mother; as a rule, she makes it what she is herself. All the finest sentiment of the heart centers about the mother; would that she were always worthy the adoration of her children! "The light of love in my mother's face," says one man, "made home bright and happy. Her cheerful, contented spirit, her calm way of meeting disappointments, her charitable way of judging others, her kind way of giving encouragement, helped me to see how to

take life. She seemed to have a wellspring of joy in her heart." Many will sympathize with the Rev. Robert Collyer's daughter, who said to her mother, when the latter returned home after a brief absence, "Mamma, I was so lonesome when you were away that I used to go into the closet and hug your dresses." Think of the unbounded influence of such a Christian mother over such a child! Remembering the many thousands of Christian mothers in the land, it is no wonder that two hundred and fifty young men in one convention testified that their religious life began in the home, under the influence of Christian mothers. Many can join with Abraham Lincoln in declaring, "All that I am or may be I owe to my sainted mother." It was not always, seldom perhaps, what the mother said; much more was it her daily life, her heart of love, her exhaustless patience under trials, her sunny spirit, her self-denying care for her loved ones, her habit of seeking help from above in difficulties, a thousand other beautiful traits of her lovely character and her winsome personality. The impress of her Christian life on the child is as sure and as enduring as the stamp on the minted gold.

Sometimes it is the father rather than the mother who makes the deeper impression on the

child. There may be sad defects in the mother's life, even when she tries to be a Christian; she may be fretful, quick to anger, hasty in words, moody, and complaining. Said one little girl whose mother failed to keep her promise: "My mother lied to me. I will never believe her again." In such cases where the mother's Christian character is discredited in the eyes of her children it may be that the counteracting force for good will come from the father. He will be the tall oak about which the little vines may cluster and find support for their climbing. "My father," says one man, "was the one I always looked up to as my ideal. His truly Christian spirit in the home, and his high moral position in the community, molded the character of his boy as nothing else did." But it is easy for fathers to make mistakes. The strength of a man is sometimes his weakness, and his masculine will a snare, in his dealing with children. "O, why did you do it?" asked a kind-hearted woman of a prisoner carried to prison for life. He was a young man, son of a minister, gentlemanly in appearance, too intelligent and refined for such criminality. "Why," he replied, "I guess it was too much hard religion from dad and too much company around the corner. Ministers always seem to

think they are all heaven and their boys are all hell." Probably the desperate fellow exaggerated the defects of that good man, his father, but even ministers are not always wise. The well-meaning father probably forgot—perhaps he never learned—how to adapt his religious ideals to childhood. Perhaps he was like the father of the Scotch boy, who, while being instructed concerning heaven, suddenly asked, "Will feyther be there?" And when he was told that his father would be there he replied, "Then I'll nae gang."

Moreover, the home atmosphere may be as heavenly as could be desired so far as both father and mother are concerned, but there will always be some crevice where evil will creep in. It has already been suggested that the servant in the home is likely to be a moral peril. A cook once told to a little sensitive girl something so horrible and cruel that it actually tortured the child to death. This was not as bad as if she had injected into the child's soul an insidious poison, to work life-long mischief and moral ruin. Then there are visitors—some wise, some otherwise. "A pretty young woman sat in my house not long since," writes one lady, "and told calmly how she had cheated the street car company of her fare. She stole four cents, and my wide-eyed little

ones heard." There was no help for it; it came too suddenly. A wise talk afterward may have helped to undo the mischief. The same writer gives another instance where a visitor began to retail a piece of gossip unfit for a child to hear, while the little girl of her hostess sat intently listening. The moment the mother sensed the situation she said to her little daughter, "Leave the room instantly." The well-trained child obeyed, and the gossip monger felt the rebuke enough to bring her story to an end quickly. Ceaseless vigilance is the price of a safe home and a pure home atmosphere.

Whatever be the cost, the right moral and spiritual atmosphere within and about the home makes for the true development of the child's religious life, and preserves him from the evil that is in the world, as nothing else can. Other things are important and will be emphasized, but with all other things supplied and the right moral atmosphere in the home lacking, the religious life of the child will have to be contended for against great odds, and too often the result will be doubtful.

CHAPTER III

SUGGESTION

A SUGGESTION is an impulse given to the mind, starting a train of thought, feeling, desire, or physical movement. Anything that knocks at the door of the senses may give the impulse. Readiness to receive such impulses and respond to them is suggestibility. All minds are suggestible, some much more than others. The minds of children are particularly suggestible. It is this that keeps them in movement from one thing to another all day long. This is nature's way for their mental and physical development, and must not be carelessly interfered with. If you want to spoil a child utterly, keep him still. "That child of mine is never still a moment," complains a tired mother. She ought to be thankful, for only live boys and girls make live men and women. Moreover, his infinite suggestibility makes it possible to educate him along such lines as we will.

A suggestion may be offered, received, considered, and responded to when the mind is conscious. This is quite common. But suggestion

may also find its way into our souls and produce an effect without our thinking much about it. Such a suggestion may produce an immediate effect, or it may work silently without apparent effect until some time afterward. Whether the effect be immediate or remote, it is often surprising, and at times may seem almost miraculous. This form of suggestion is particularly commended to the consideration of parents. For directing the child's development, for the formation of moral habits, and for the control of the child, it is indispensable.

The scientific explanation is that there is a deeper self than ordinarily appears in consciousness. In this deeper, or subconscious, self there are carried on not only many of the physical processes (a fact quite apparent to everybody), but also mental activities, perhaps as little interrupted by our lapses into partial or total unconsciousness as are the bodily functions. We see an iceberg steadily moving southward in spite of opposing winds, and it excites our wonder until we learn that, according to the Standard Dictionary, eleven twelfths of the berg are below the surface, reaching far down into the ocean stream that sets southward from the polar regions. We are something like that. Only in

small part are we self-conscious, self-governed; our deeper self, which is the greater part of us, reaches down into the undercurrents of being that bear us ever onward whether we sleep or wake, whether we take thought or not.

In the parent's use of suggestion there are five important practical rules. First, never give the child a suggestion that will do him harm. Secondly, keep the child away from evil suggestion. Thirdly, rescue the child from any evil suggestion he may have received by suggesting something else that will counteract the evil. Fourthly, study to put right suggestion into the child's mind, at the right time and in the right way. Finally, encourage in the child habits of quick, right, and wholesome auto-suggestion. Under each point a few illustrations may be given.

First, never give a child a suggestion that will do harm. In their carelessness in regard to this, many parents sow seeds of evil in the minds of their little ones and, when the inevitable result appears, innocently wonder how it all came about. A little four-year-old girl was overheard repeating to herself over and over, "You bad, naughty girl!" These epithets had apparently been recently applied to herself in a very pointed manner. Some time afterward, when she had done an unu-

sually reprehensible piece of mischief, the distressed parent appealed to the child to tell why she did such things. "Because I am a naughty girl," was the ready answer. The mother had driven a false and mischievous idea into the soul of the little innocent. Parents seem to have no thought of the pernicious effects of such evil suggestions. There is no surer way to destroy all possibility of any moral development of a child than to repeatedly remind him of his innate wickedness, and talk before him of the "utter impossibility of doing anything with that child." Much harm has also been done to children by impressing them with the idea that they are too young to understand about religion, too young to seek Christ, or to confess Christ. "Suffer the little children to come unto me," says Christ, "and forbid them not." Reading and talking about crime in the presence of the child is a sure way to poison his mind. All crime is contagious through suggestion. It is the same with scandal and evil gossip. Some children drink in these things as a sponge drinks up water. Even the parental rules may be given in such a way as to suggest the very evils they are intended to prohibit. The publication of specific laws always has this effect to a greater or less extent; therefore the fewer

minute rules and regulations the better. "Many a child," says Professor Pattee, "never thought of certain kinds of mischief until his parent warned him against them." He illustrates this by telling the amusing story of a mother who had occasion to leave her children by themselves for a few hours. She warned them against everything that she could think of, and said finally, "Now don't you put any beans in your ears." Probably the children never heard of that delightful pastime; anyhow, they all had beans in their ears when the mother returned.

Secondly, shield the child as far as possible from mischievous and evil suggestion. In this world of evil who will protect the little ones if the parent does not? It is impossible to avoid all touch of evil; that might not be best. It is part of the discipline of life to meet evil and overcome it. But we are to remember that the suggestibility of the child is great, and that his power of resisting evil is not yet fully developed. He needs protection.

Some associations are so bad that a child must be withheld from them as far as possible. Some places are so full of evil suggestion that children must avoid them as they would the pestilence. Some amusements—card-playing, for instance—

are so seductive they should not be allowed. Some of the periodical literature of the day is so full of evil suggestion that no child should be allowed to look upon it. Walter Taylor Field, in "Fingerposts to Children's Reading," says: "A small boy of my acquaintance became highly interested, not long ago, in the adventures of a naughty youth presented in the comic supplement of a well-known paper. The youth in the newspaper shampooed his sister's hair and anointed the poodle with a mixture of ink, glue, and the family hair tonic, leaving the remainder of the compound in the bottle for the use of his father and mother. The results as pictorially set forth were so intensely amusing that the small observer immediately took steps to repeat them in real life. Much mischief is suggested in such ways as this, and the suggestions come from artists who have little sympathy with children, knowing them mainly as a theme to make jokes about." Mr. Field observes further that the humor in these funny pictures is almost always in somebody's misfortune, and that while we seek to have our children brought up to be thoughtful of the comfort of others, respectful to their elders, kind and considerate toward all, these coarse pictures foster a selfish disregard of other people's

comfort, irreverence, and a low and malicious pleasure in the mistakes and misfortunes of others. Bar all such pernicious newspapers from your home as you love your children. Save the child as far as possible from needless exposure to evil. In the daily rounds of life and duty he will meet all the temptations needed for his soul's discipline, all he will be able to contend with and overcome.

In the third place, rescue the child from all manner of evil suggestion by counter-suggestions of good. This is an art in which every parent and teacher ought to be an adept. Here, for instance, is a little girl coming to her mother in a tumult of passion, saying: "I'll never play with Susie again as long as I live. She won't let me do anything I want to." The mother takes no notice of this, but quietly suggests, "Have you shown Susie the picture book your uncle gave you?" The counter-suggestion quickly obliterates all traces of the storm, and soon the two little heads are together in delightful companionship. It may not always be as easy as this, but with tactful generalship and a fair field the forces of good will always rout the evil.

Evil suggestion takes a thousand forms, and crowds upon us like the bacterial germs that fill

the atmosphere, and moral disinfectants are in constant demand. Anger, envy, jealousy, revenge, deceit, dishonesty, selfishness, doubt, fear, despondency, and cowardice are but a few of the many harmful impulses the parent will be called upon to combat. They can be best counteracted in the child when the parent himself lives, not only above the power of these evil forces, but so permeated by the opposite qualities that evil suggestion cannot live in their presence. Dr. Randall has well said that "the one who holds the positive, hopeful, confident, good-natured, kindly, courageous mental attitude is the person who inevitably radiates sunshine and gladness, good health and cheer, confidence and happiness, wherever he may go. The one who holds the negative, despondent, fearful, timorous, anxious, or sorrowful mental attitude, whether he intends it or not, is, by the law of suggestion, creating forces that make people sad and discouraged, fearful and anxious. Every thought you think possesses this suggestive power. It sows its seed in every life you touch. It makes the atmosphere of the home a blessing or a curse." In an atmosphere of purity, love, and good cheer, the effects of evil suggestion are instantly checked and soon destroyed.

Even when the evil has taken a firm hold of the life and grown into a habit, a counter-suggestion of good has often worked a radical cure. The story is told of a nine-year-old boy who was notoriously dishonest. Even his own mother declared that he was incorrigible, and had sent him away from home. Against the forewarnings of those who knew the boy, Professor Riddell engaged this lad to distribute handbills. He first took the boy and said to him, "Now, I'm going to be honest with you, and you are going to be honest with me, and we are going to be honest with everybody else." The confidence of the lad was gained, and he confessed his wrongdoing with tears. Professor Riddell gave him no hard rebuke, but repeatedly asserted his confidence that he was not a bad boy at heart, and that he meant to do the right thing and would do it. Nobody had even suggested such a thing as that to him in all his life, and it took a strong hold upon him. He worked with the Professor three weeks, and showed not a sign of dishonest purpose; and, according to latest reports, he was thoroughly healed of his tendency toward dishonesty. Much of the success of Judge Lindsey at Denver turns on the wonderful power of a counter-suggestion of good against habits of evil. It was much

easier for Michael Angelo to see an angel in a block of marble than it is for some parents to discern the good boy or good girl deep in the heart of the wayward child. They can see the imp on the surface and look no farther. Judge Lindsey, and others of his type, have shown us how to look deeper and find the true heart; and how to reach that true heart and inspire it with a touch of confidence, sympathy, and encouragement.

If you consider the child too bad, or too lacking, or too trifling to ever amount to anything, the child will know it, and probably adopt your view. This is the way, says Professor Van Liew, to produce incorrigibles. Too much dwelling on the dark side produces darkness and confusion of soul. Let the talk be of the good rather than of the bad. "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." Talk of these things. Get these things into the child's mind, let them sink down into his deeper self, and the false, dishonest, impure, and unlovely things will vanish away.

But the religious life is something more than an endless conflict with evil; it is a glad following after the good, an earnest and enthusiastic

striving after high ideals, and therefore we must, in the fourth place, study to put right suggestions into the child's mind at the right time and in the best way. The time, circumstances, and manner of the suggestion will make all the difference in the world. Some parents mean well, but they have no practical wisdom. They undertake the delicate business of introducing into the subconscious selfhood of the child an idea, that should abide and become a controlling factor in his life as long as he may live, without any regard whatever for favoring time, circumstances, or manner. No wonder they fail. For the best results one should have first a clear idea of what he wants to accomplish, and then choose the time and circumstances when the child will most readily receive the suggested idea. This will not be when his conscious mind is most crowded and busy. A lesson might be learned from the methods of psychotherapy, through which many of the evils possessing mind or body have been dislodged by suggestion. In one way or another the consciousness of the present is temporarily set aside, and the subconscious self, with the back-lying causes of the patient's ills, stands revealed. In this way the right counter-suggestion may be introduced and the cure effected. In like manner the

child will best be reached when his mind is freest from the interests that occupy him during the day, in some quiet hour during the day, or just before bedtime, after the activities of the day are over. In an address on the "Law of Suggestion in Child-Training" Dr. Randall says: "The suggestion of right things to the child is the fundamental principle of child-training. The best time for such suggestion is just before the child goes to sleep. The influence of this fifteen minutes or half an hour is immeasurable. It is the great golden opportunity for reaching the child's subconscious self, in other words its real soul. In these few precious minutes we can make the child any kind of man or woman that we like."

Besides this there is a remarkable power in repeated suggestion, repeated not monotonously and with wearisome insistence, but with skillful variation. A marked instance of intellectual development is at this time attracting the attention of the world; it is that of a young lad of eleven years delivering a lecture before the professors of Harvard College on the properties of the "fourth dimension." For an hour and a half this lad in knickerbockers held the closest attention of his auditors. How did he come to this intellectual development so wonderful for his

years? His father explains it as the result of skillful suggestion. The boy, who is the son of Dr. Sidis, is not a mere "infant prodigy" in mathematics; he is almost as proficient in other studies as in mathematics. He showed no taste for mathematics until his father and mother "talked up" mathematics purposely in his presence, and the father spent an hour or so evenings in plays that involved mathematical processes, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. In these plays the father deftly led the boy's mind from the toys to the mathematical principles underlying their use. The consequence was that the boy took up the study of mathematics of his own accord and with the greatest enthusiasm. In a couple of years he knew more of the subject than his father did. What was done for this young lad's intellectual development by skillful suggestion can be done for almost any child in its moral development, provided the same wisdom and persistence are used. Not one word was said directly to influence the lad to take up this study, but a great deal indirectly, suggestively. Here is a great lesson for parents. Children are not to be driven, coaxed, or hired to be good, but so adroitly dealt with that they will go in the way of righteousness of their own accord, and never

know what is leading them. Had Dr. Sidis compelled his boy to take up a distasteful study, the chances are that he would have hated it ever after. Great is parental authority, but ten times greater is the art of indirect suggestion. The one bears heavily on the will for a time, the other touches the very springs of life and abides.

Besides the suggestions that reach the child from without there are suggestions in great variety that spring from his own mind (auto-suggestions). These may be the fruitful source of moral weakness, of evils untold, and of perils both to soul and body, or, on the other hand, they may be a defense, a source of all-conquering courage and strength, and a mainspring of all true and noble living. So important a factor in a child's life must not be neglected. It may be looked at from three standpoints—as a source of evil and danger, as a defense, and as an inspiration and guidance to a splendid life.

First, as a source of evil. Children are subject to strange impulses, for which no reason can be given except that "it was born in them." While some of these innate impulses are good, and some of neutral character, others are of all stages of badness, from mischievousness to criminality. Sometimes these inborn impulses are so mali-

ciously and fearfully evil that the children seem to be "possessed of the Evil One." Young children have been so persistently wayward as to be the despair of parental solicitude, and sometimes have committed deeds of horror at which the world shudders. In 1909, for instance, there were over eleven thousand children convicted of crime in the children's courts of New York city. All of these children were under sixteen, nearly five thousand under twelve. The evil suggestions that lead to these evil courses are sometimes due to physical and other causes that may be remedied. (See especially under Chapter IX.) For others we can give no account, except that they are the baleful heritage of an ancestry of uncounted generations. In these cases the parent needs peculiar wisdom. To denounce the child as an "imp of Satan," "so bad nobody can do anything with him" (this too in the child's presence), is only to confirm and strengthen the evil within. To undertake to drive out the evil by harsh and cruel treatment is equally mischievous. Endless patience, kindness, and sympathy, rather than harshness, wise counter-suggestions, overlooking many mistakes and promptly commending any good, are more likely to help the child in its battle with its own inherent weaknesses. It is well

also to remember our great resource of help in the Holy Spirit. "Howbeit," said Jesus on one occasion, "this kind goeth not out save by prayer." No case is hopeless; no one needs to despair, neither the parent nor the child.

But the child may spontaneously furnish his own defense. The same inner self that gives birth to evil impulses gives birth to others so pure, so true, so good, that in their presence evil impulses perish and are forgotten. The following illustration is a good one, though not directly in the line of the moral life. T. W. Higginson tells us in "Cheerful Yesterdays" that when a lad of fourteen he was overgrown—six feet in height—and incurably shy in society, sitting mute and ill at ease while others were gayly chatting. In one social gathering he cured himself of his shyness instantly and forever by the self-suggestion that came like a flash, "I am the equal of these here present in studies and on the playground; why not cope with them in society?" Instantly all his bashfulness vanished forever, and all the company marveled at the change. In like manner in the moral field the battle is often equally brief when the pure and right suggestion rises. Witness the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness as the story is told in the Gospels.

Notice how quickly every suggestion of the tempter was countered by a passage from the Holy Scriptures. The same thing in effect occurs daily in the life of the child. Temptations come for him to say or do something wrong, but he resists. He explains his moral victory by saying, "I just thought of you, mamma," or "I thought of what father said," or "It just popped into my head that verse we read the other morning," or "I remembered what the other boy did in the story," or "The old saying came to me," etc. If the child is commended and told that this thinking of right things in the time of temptation is one of the best ways to overcome, indeed the very way Jesus did, he will be on the alert to find these counter-suggestions in the time of need, and it will go far toward establishing a firm moral and spiritual character.

Naturally very little comes from the mind that has not, in some form or other, been put into it. Jesus had apt Scripture for his defense in the day of temptation because his mind was full of it. So may the mind of the child be filled. Among the many right things that will spring readily to mind in times of stress, in the hour and power of darkness, are good and wholesome proverbial sayings, the concentrated wisdom of

generations. Familiarity with noble examples will be an inspiration. Moreover, the boy who asks his heavenly Father to take care of him through the day will have the right thought given him to save him when his feet begin to slide. "My steps," said the psalmist, "had well-nigh slipped," but he thought of something and was saved. Every victory of this sort weakens the hold of evil upon us, and builds us up in true and godly character.

Not only does self-suggestion come to us as a defense against evil, the evil suggestions of our own minds and all other forms of evil temptation, but it comes as an inspiration to high and noble living. There is, for instance, power in a right idea when it takes possession of us. The trouble is, first, that most of the good and right ideas that come to us are like the seeds sown by the wayside, held but momentarily in the mind, then lost. It is one thing to think a right thought, quite another to be possessed by it. A second trouble is that too often we feebly allow the false and evil to take possession of us, instead of the true and good, as when a boy gets the foolish impression that his mother does not care for him. How soon then does he fall into wild and reckless ways! These are among the thorns that spring

up and choke the word. But suppose, now, a child says over and over to himself, in his quietest hours, or just before he falls asleep, "God loves me," or "I am God's child." The great and true thought will bury itself deep in the child's innermost soul and put wonderful inspiration into his life. There is power also in an ideal. Jesus is the ideal for young and old, and when the child says it over and over to himself, "I want to be like Jesus," he puts a suggestive thought into his soul that will lift him constantly higher and higher. There is power also in a right purpose; and when the child whispers it in his prayer, and breathes it to himself before he falls to sleep, "Lord, help me to do right," "I mean to do right; hard as it seems, I will do it," that prayer and that purpose will make him strong to do the right, take the right step, say the right thing, and accomplish the hard and distasteful task. Thousands of boys and girls are entering each new day of life with such true thoughts, such high ideals, such noble purposes, possessing them, and making their lives sublime.

Besides these high moral motives which the mind of the well-disposed child purposely suggests to itself, the heart of the child that loves God is surprisingly fertile in right and holy im-

pulses that seem to come of themselves. It is really amazing what a devoted child will think of to say or do "for Jesus' sake." Times without number the slower moving and more cautious thought of the parent has been led into prompt, right, and generous action by the quicker impulses of the child. These noble and generous impulses springing spontaneously in the heart of the child have often become life purposes, leading to splendid lives of self-sacrifice and service. Many a devoted minister, missionary, or other Christian worker can trace back to childhood days his call to the work and his growing purpose to devote life and all to the special service to which he felt himself directed. Not that the child's impulses are always wise, even if noble and generous; but if the parent cannot approve, it were better to give deft and gentle guidance rather than rude discouragement, for there is altogether too much dependent on the child's spontaneous impulses to trifle with them for a moment.

CHAPTER IV

IMITATION

IMITATION is a specific form of suggestion, by which we are moved to think, to feel, to speak, to do, as others think, feel, speak, and do, and to become what they are. This is one of the strongest propensities of human nature, and, on the whole, one of the most valuable. "No other living creature," says Professor Brewster, "is one half as imitative as man." No man or woman wholly outgrows it, or is ever able to completely overcome it. "Each of us," says Professor James, "is in fact what he is almost exclusively by virtue of his imitativeness."

Imitativeness is particularly strong in children, and enters very largely into their plays, studies, work, and associations, conforming all according to the patterns with which they are familiar. This conformity is by no means wholly outward, but reaches to the very depths of the child's nature, so that he not only gets the parent's ways of speaking and acting, but the parent's own manner of thought, sentiment, feeling, and purpose. Let no one think he can accomplish any good by "set-

ting an example" which he does not follow himself always and everywhere; for to a dead certainty the child will find him out, and by force of imitation become a hypocrite and a deceiver like himself. Watch the little child at his play, living happily in an imitation world copied from the lives of grown-up people. There is the mother again in the little girl with her doll, not the mother merely at her sweetest and best, but just as she is in fact. There is not only the gentle mother's love and care, but the petulant, fretted, and angered mother, complaining, scolding, and administering condign and summary chastisement in every imagined time of need. In the little girl's plays we shall also see in miniature the mother's social life, with its veneer of politeness and its reality of envy, jealousy, and prejudice, which no make-believe professions can hide for a moment from the quick intuitions of the watching child. The boy is no less a faithful copy of his father. But this copying of father and mother is by no means all, for the soul of the child is a mirror that reflects literally everything, and is, in fact, a small copy of the world. By turns he transforms himself into whatever he beholds; now he is a barking dog running on all fours, now a horse, now a pump, now a puffing

locomotive, now a hand car, now a snake writhing in the grass, or a preacher, or teacher, a policeman, a merchant—anything or everything he ever saw or heard.

All this shows what a singularly imitative being we have to deal with, and suggests that we ought to study most carefully how to bring this great force to bear on the development of the moral and spiritual life, and how we should guard against its dangers, for it is as potent for evil as it is for good. It seems scarcely necessary to say, in the first place, that a parent must not fail to be what he would have his child become, but, strange to say, it is just here that parents are most commonly at fault. Many people seem to be under the delusion that, whatever their own lives may be, they can bring up their children in the way they should go, by force of parental authority, by instruction, by penalties and rewards, or by careful training. From generation to generation this error is handed down, and continued failures appear to teach no lesson. The writer remembers hearing a man commanding with an oath his little son to stop swearing; he might as well have commanded, as King Canute did, the ocean tides to go back. Of course the boy grew up to be a swearer like his father. Instruction is good,

right parental government is good, but defects in the parent's character will baffle all parental instruction and training, all parental anxiety, prayers, and tears. Why do so many children reject the religious faith in which they were brought up? The reason is not generally very hard to find. The parents are not faithful examples of the religion they profess. This is sometimes due to a false conception of what religion is; supposing it to consist in pious forms and sentiments, in outward observances and in the keeping of churchly rules, quite apart from the practical moral life. Others are simply careless.

Many are the ways in which this carelessness shows itself in Christian homes. Take, for instance, the playing of bridge, of which an editorial in the New York Christian Advocate has this to say: "A portentous phase of the gambling craze is that it has invaded the churches, not merely those that tacitly allow everything that does not make a public scandal, but those that have a reputation for greater vigilance. Clergymen, in their denominational meetings and their interdenominational clubs, deplore the situation more vividly than anything herein portrayed, but confess their inability to change the situation.

The wives and daughters of not a few clergymen play bridge without the least regard to the influence they exert. So strong is the tide, the total destitution of reason or true devotion, that many would give up their religious connections rather than their gambling. The knowledge of this has silenced some clergymen. Some of another spirit participate with the ladies, and propose that the winnings be devoted to the 'Cause of God.' Some ladies of 'high degree' have gone straight from the holy communion, on Sunday, to the bridge party. The fever has spread to all the great denominations." The effect on the children is vigorously set forth by the editor. It seems incredible that Christian mothers should, by their example, bring up their children to card-playing and gambling!

The use of narcotics by the father leads the child to habits poisonous to soul and body. The use of alcoholics in the home, as a beverage or as a medicine, is almost certain to produce awful results. In the same editorial from which we have just quoted is given an instance of the awful results of parental gambling and using of intoxicants: "Dungeoned in a prison in the Middle West was a young man chained to an iron bed, awaiting the day of execution. His mother,

whom he had not seen in years, came to the prison to take leave of him. To the horror of the chaplain, and even of the jailer, he refused to have the interview. She came to the door and pleaded with him. So far as his shackles would allow he turned his back upon her exclaiming: 'Go away! It was you that put the wine to my lips. It was you that taught me to gamble. It was drinking and gambling that brought me here.' "

It must be confessed that too little attention has been given to the practical life, in other words, the ethical side of religion, by Christian people generally whose piety cannot be questioned. Ian Maclaren, in his wholesome little book, "The Homely Virtues," says: "One is haunted by the feeling that the church has not always laid enough stress on righteousness." "We are inclined sometimes to think that if a man be religious he must be straightforward, but we have leaped too hastily to a conclusion, for there are people with a genuine sense of religion who are as crooked as a corkscrew." Trust a child to see the crookedness if it exists. Count with certainty on the imitativeness of his nature to reproduce the crookedness in his own life. Time will not allow more than the slightest reference to the hypocrisies and false pretenses, the un-

kindness and discourtesies, the fretting and complaining, the uncharitableness and fault-finding, the selfishness and greed, that through imitation pass down from one generation to another. People are astonished to find certain bad traits in their children. "How could it happen? Where in the world did the child pick up this?" Nine times out of ten the secret source of such evil is in the life and character of the parent himself.

It is, of course, impossible that any should be absolutely perfect, nor is this necessary, but we must be real and in earnest. The more earnest we are, the more contagious is our example. As Edward Howard Griggs says, "It is not whether we arrive, but whether we earnestly strive, that determines our lifting power over our children." He cites the instance of Professor Agassiz, who was not always correct in his conclusions, but was such an enthusiast that by force of his own example he made students of nature by the hundred. If a parent wishes to make his children real and active Christians, he cannot do so as well as by his own enthusiastic Christian life and work. Mere correctness of deportment will not do it. Instruction, personal appeal, and influence may fail, but one thing is sure: the contagion of real and enthusiastic Christian living is irresist-

ible. How quickly will the child catch the spirit of reverence when parents show due respect to each other and to all, when the school teacher, the minister, the church, the Word of God, God himself, are spoken of in a becoming manner, never slightingly, never in the spirit of criticism or of complaint! Love, the fundamental principle of religion, is not communicated by commandment as much as by example. "We love him," not so much because we are commanded to do so as "because he first loved us." In the religious education of children there is nothing more effective than right example; that holds and draws the child with a force he cannot resist—not a coldly correct example, but an example pulsing with a warm and strong current of life, such an example as Jesus set before his disciples. Omit this, and all your labor and anxiety is likely to come to naught. Some may object that an imitative virtue can have but little value, and that is true, but the imitation we are speaking of is not the mere copying of another's ways but the actual sharing of another's spirit. Agassiz's students were no less real students because they were under the spell of the great teacher's example; they were all the more real because of it. "I have given you an example," says Jesus, and those who fol-

low his example are not mere imitation Christians, for to follow his example is to partake of his spirit and share his life.

So far we have been thinking of the general conduct of the parent in its effect on the imitative child, but in every life there are times of special stress and strain that test the character to its utmost. It is not enough to live a good life on the average, but we must be found pure gold when the crucial testing comes. What is the use of professing faith when the first hard trial throws us into gloomy despair? or Christian patience when we explode in anger or fretfulness when our plans are spoiled? Never does a right example have such power as when passing successfully through hard and bitter trials. An incident in a little girl's life is to the point. She stood one day watching intently her mother and Bridget, the help, preparing strawberry preserves, and at the same time making squash pies for company. In an unfortunate moment when the mother happened not to be looking, Bridget, in a fit of absent-mindedness, took up the squash and poured it deliberately into the preserves. The mother was naturally quick and impulsive, but, seeing the look of consternation on Bridget's face, she uttered not a word of reproach or of

useless lament. It was a never-to-be-forgotten lesson for the little girl that stood by observing all things with a child's keen insight. Years afterward she wrote, "My mother never did for me a more valuable morning's work than when she gave that unconscious lesson of self-control." It is in the crises of life that the true self appears, and it is exactly in these crucial times of intense and absorbing interest that the child is most impressed. These are the lessons that remain the longest in memory. To see a father standing strong and true for his temperance principles even when his life was threatened, to see him not answering a word to a storm of vituperation, to see him in joyful peace when the death angel touched him, are among the great things of the writer's boyhood that he can never forget. There are crucial times in every life; times when the financial strain is almost more than can be sustained, times when unfriendly voices are heard, when sudden disaster falls, when plans are interrupted, when affliction comes. Remember then the little watching ones, who, through an imitativeness they can hardly resist, are coming to be like you, seeing you as you are.

The parents are not, however, the only ones who are writing themselves into the life and char-

acter of the little ones; the imitative genius of the child takes something from everything and from everybody within reach. Playmates, friends, teachers, visitors are unconsciously imitated both in outward ways and inward spirit; and, as if this were not enough, the real characters of history and the imaginary characters of song and story are added. The westward march of bands of small boys armed and equipped for Indian warfare, generally coming to grief a few miles from home, presents an instance of the almost resistless power of imitation, for it is not merely the person present to the senses but the hero pictured to the mind that attracts the child. This is a fact of great importance in his religious education, and suggests at once the wisdom of keeping out of the child's mind the coarse and debasing images of the cheap novel and other morally unwholesome books and periodicals. Here appears the great value of histories or stories, read or told, that fill the mind with the images of noble men, women, and children, and their worthy deeds. The stories of Bible characters have been particularly utilized for the purposes of prepossessing the child's mind with wholesome and inspiring images; unfortunately, most of these Bible characters must be consider-

ably idealized, and when the real character is discovered later there is a dangerous reaction. This is one of the many reasons why Sunday schools fail to hold the older boys. Better a good and noble character of fiction than a half-good, half-bad character of sacred history. Better to fix the mind on a noble moral hero of the present than a hero of sacred story for whose misdeeds we need to apologize. But there are ways of using the Bible stories without vouching for the moral character of the heroes, as when Dr. Chapman recently told so effectively the story of the father heart of King David breaking over the conduct of his unfilial son, Absalom, and longing more for the boy than for his own successes or life itself. Four hundred men and boys broke down under this story and gave their hearts to God.

There is another great fact connected with this subject that has a very great deal to do with the religious development of both old and young; the mind, out of its varied experiences and acquired knowledge, creates its own ideal, and then, by force of its native imitativeness, draws life and character up to its self-formed ideal. It is like the officer who won a battle by seizing a flag, and planting it far in advance, shouted, "Bring

the men up to the colors!" So the soul plants its ideal far ahead and pulls toward it. Does a child do this? Most assuredly he does. It is what every child is doing. Unfortunately, there is often something wrong with the ideals. How can we help him to form the highest and best ideals? By having such ideals ourselves. By leading him into right associations, and by putting in his way the right kind of reading matter. By talking up the world's noblest and best characters in his presence and for his benefit. Making Jesus Christ an ideal has been a strong uplifting force in many young lives. A singular movement has occurred in some sections among the young people, receiving its impetus from the simple question, "What would Jesus do?" The results have been quite startling. A child's life fashioned by this thought would not go far astray. This is indeed the true Christian life, the life patterned after Christ, following him, walking in his steps.

A proper control of our natural imitativeness, bringing it into subjection to high religious purposes, is an important Christian duty. It is not an easy thing to do. Imitativeness is a propensity written very deep into our nature, and taxes all our watchcare and will power to hold in

check. It comes to be a very insidious evil at times, betraying Christian people into many foolish sins, hindering their spiritual development, and restraining their Christian activity. Our natural tendency is to think as others think, feel as others feel, go where others go, do and say what others do and say. We are, in fact, human chameleons, unconsciously taking the color of our surroundings, be they what they will. The only way to gain a permanent mastery of this propensity is to begin in childhood. Cultivate a proper independence of character, boldness to stand alone when one is right, and loyalty to our ideal, to Jesus our example, under all circumstances. Impress upon the children that "That is the way the others did," and "They all do so," are never to be accepted as valid excuses for wrongdoing.

CHAPTER V

INSTRUCTION

THE greatest mistake ever made by those who are interested in the religious education of the young is to suppose that instruction is the great and all-sufficient desideratum. There are several other things of far more importance and of greater value for the religious life. At the same time religious instruction has its value, and is not to be neglected. Instruction gives knowledge, and knowledge sometimes controls action. "You are such a help to me at home," said a woman with an unmistakable Yiddish accent to a teacher in New York, whom she met on the street, and then explained herself as follows: "Sometimes Bennie, he say he won't; then he quick stop, and he say, 'All right, mamma; Miss K. says it is all right I should obey.'" One concrete example like this is better than many pages of speculation as to the value of moral instruction in the public schools, as well as in the home.

A great deal, in fact nearly everything, depends upon how the instruction is given. Once a child's religious instruction seemed to be a very simple

problem. All knowledge sufficient unto salvation had been condensed into solid chunks which it was necessary that the child should swallow, *nolens volens,* whether he understood anything of it or not. It was simply a process of cramming. It was, "Cram the child with the Catechism, and cram the Bible into him; if he doesn't understand now, he will some time." Fortunately, there were other sources of spiritual enlightenment, or those brought up under such a regimen would have fared ill; as it was, many acquired an unconquerable distaste for religion. Place no dependence on the church Catechism; it may have its use for those who are able to digest it, but the religious life of little children is not nourished that way. The Bible is, of course, indispensable, but no books in the world need to be used so discriminatingly in religious instruction as do the Sacred Scriptures. Because something is in the Bible it is not for that reason alone useful for spiritual enlightenment or nourishment.

Some parents err in giving too much direct religious instruction. They estimate its importance too highly, perhaps supposing that it alone will insure the religious character of the child. Too much direct religious instruction is worse than none at all. Another thing: it is easy to

talk; we love to talk; it frees our mind, and we fondly hope accomplishes miracles of good. So we talk, talk, talk, until we have worn out ourselves and the child too. Well-timed advice, brief and to the point, is often of inestimable benefit, but a constant dribble of advice is a desolation. The soul revolts against it, and longs for the wings of a dove that it might fly away and be at rest. Perpetual harping on one string of well-meant counsel drives many a boy and girl away.

First of all, religious instruction must be adapted to the child's receptivity, and that will be found to vary not only at different ages, but also with children of the same age, and with the same child at different times. A pail of water cannot be poured into a two-ounce vial, nor can the bottle be filled at all unless we graduate the inflowing stream to the size of the neck. Receptiveness will often depend on our methods. We can so teach that every avenue of the child's soul will open wide, or we can so teach that he will instinctively shut himself up as tight as a clam within its shell. We must get our point of contact with him, which will be somewhere near the level of his daily interests. "I was once called as a substitute," says Dr. Patterson DuBois, "to teach a class of very frisky boys of perhaps nine to eleven

years. The lesson was on the Golden Rule. The boys were in a state of ceaseless activity and mischief-making. It was plain that they would be utterly beyond my control if I persisted in mere Scripture readings or with ethical abstractions. In less time than it takes to tell it I said to myself, 'Get your point of contact; address them through their senses; get on the plane of the boy's interests.' I immediately drew an ivory foot rule out of my pocket and asked what it was. Silence and attention were immediate. Some called it a 'ruler,' and a 'measure,' and one finally said it was a 'rule.'" As the teacher went on, drawing upon their knowledge and experience in the use of rules and measures, there was no longer any lack of interest in that class, and the lesson on the Golden Rule was absorbed with even a show of eagerness.

So far as the subject-matter is concerned, nothing of real importance for the moral and spiritual development of the child is beyond his capacity if properly set before him. Moreover, no subjects of instruction are more interesting to the child than those pertaining to the moral and spiritual life when properly treated. This is the testimony of many English teachers, brought out in a recent investigation concerning

"Moral Instruction and Training in Schools." One reason given for this is that the child sees (as he does not see in some other studies) the practical value of such lessons and their ready application. If a child ever shows disrelish for religious instruction, it is almost certain to be our own fault. We have not studied him enough to know what he needs or how to help him. The mother of the man who is said to have "done more than any other living man to put out of business the venders of impurity in books, pictures, and worse things," Anthony Comstock, knew how to make the religious instruction of her child one of his greatest delights. "To-day," says his biographer, "nothing is so sacred to her grown up boy as the memory of the children's Sunday nights with their mother. Sunday was no bugbear in that home. She would gather the children around her, close up, and tell them stories. These stories were often from the Bible, sometimes from other sources, but always they were stories of moral heroism. That one thing she instilled into the minds and hearts and breath and blood of her children, until it became, for one at least of those children, the great outstanding essential in character and manhood." To this mother, who died when he was ten, Mr.

Comstock accredits all that he has been of worth in his life. This mother was not a trained educator, but by some sort of divine instinct—or was it just common sense?—she knew how to adapt her instruction so as to win the open mind and heart of her little ones. Other mothers were just as faithful, but they did not know how, and did not care to learn how.

Religious instruction may be given incidentally, as occasion suggests or as circumstances seem to require; or it may be given systematically by appointed lessons, courses of reading, or by such informal talks and telling of stories as in the instance just referred to, or the probably more formal talks given by the mother of the Wesleys.

There will be no lack of opportunity for the parent to share his wisdom and counsel with his children; the danger is that the parent will too conscientiously improve his opportunities until his wearisome repetitions drive the child frantic. Let wisdom not be too prodigal, lest she be despised. Fewer words, better chosen, and held in reserve for times when the child's mind is without other distractions and his heart is more easily reached, will accomplish more than a multitude of counsels falling by the wayside, when the heart of the child is full of other things. Answer the

child's questions. Here is nature's unsurpassed plan for feeding hungry little souls. The little chippies in their nest follow this plan, opening their mouths wide; and verily they are fed. The young of humankind hunger for something more than material food, and their little minds are open wide with all manner of questioning. Often the child's questions seem to us utterly frivolous, as, indeed, they may be; but many others are real enough, even pathetic in their eagerness. Hard must be the parent's heart that would rebuff the little pleaders with, "Don't bother me now; I'm busy," or "Don't ask so many questions; you wear me all out." Did the weary mother but know it, the golden opportunity of her life is before her, an opportunity that she will sigh for in vain a few years later. Take time to answer the little questioner to the best of your ability, and if anything is too hard for you, say to him, "We will study that up." According to Dr. G. Stanley Hall, in twelve hundred instances of manifested childish curiosity less than six per cent were idle inquisitions. Nearly every question a child puts is from a real desire to know. This same authority touches a very important point when he asserts that children from three to eight ask questions concerning the origin of life,

and the reason why they stop at eight is that they have learned enough about the subject in one way or another to be ashamed. Had the child been answered frankly and properly, this false shame would never have appeared, and, more important still, the fearful evils that grow upon the child through lack of knowledge as he comes to adolescent years would be avoided. How often does a parent wish he or she could talk freely with the son or the daughter of twelve or fourteen; but it is then almost too late. In the years from three to eight there was abundant opportunity, without the possibility of doing more harm than good, as there might be in talking on the subject with older children.

It is well also to take turn about and ask the child a few things to make him think. This Socratic method of instruction by questions is very effective if not overdone. One of the best ways for imparting indirectly all kinds of knowledge a child may need for the right development of his religious life is to talk the different subjects over in the hearing of the child. In all conversation in the home, remember the listening child. A child's mistakes—and much that seems wrong to us in the child's conduct is purely the sin of ignorance—will call for explanations

kindly and patiently given, which will add to his store of moral and spiritual truth. Moreover, things will always be happening on which it will be in place to hang a text, a proverb, a parable, a story, a talk, or a sermon; only let the sermon be of the briefest sort and very much to the point. Jesus, Teacher of all teachers, employed this method largely. However slight the incident, he could make it illustrative of great moral truth, but he used such variety and skill that nobody ever became weary. All these forms of indirect moral instruction, and any others that can be wisely used, are of the greatest possible importance; indeed, some contend that they are all-sufficient, and whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil. This seems to be the position of many of our leading educators. The reason for this preference of the indirect method arises from the dreadfully unwise manner in which direct moral instruction has been enforced in the churches, and in the church schools and in the public schools at various times and places. But there is too much value in systematic and direct moral teaching to leave it out of consideration.

Few things would seem more likely to do a child good than heart-to-heart talks. So at least thought John Wesley's mother. All will agree

that she was unusually successful in her methods. Her family was large, but every day she found time for a heart-to-heart talk with one or more of her children. Thursday evening was her hour with "Jacky." Not one was overlooked, and each had had his talk when the week ended. John Wesley greatly appreciated those motherly talks, and when he was grown up he longed to have the Thursday evening talks continued by correspondence. Every mother has the same opportunity Mrs. Wesley had. Sometimes we find a father wise enough to know that there is nothing so worth the while for him to do as to talk freely with his boys and girls (to borrow Mrs. Wesley's quaint phrase) "in things that relate to their principal concerns." Helena Thomas tells of a different sort of a man, one of the too common kind, but one who waked to his responsibility before it was quite too late. He was a lawyer, so preoccupied that he habitually held his children at arm's length, until at last he was compelled to pay them some attention. His only son was getting beyond the control of his mother. To "get acquainted" with him the father took him on a business trip. "I was surprised," he said afterward, "to find how many good points my own son had." He began to talk freely with him, telling

him some things of his own boyhood. "O, dad," the boy cried, "I'm so glad, so glad you haven't forgotten how boys feel, and what they have to fight against, for now you'll understand." Then he unbosomed his heart to his father as freely as to a chum. Then, turning to look his father full in the face, he said: "But I feel as if I can face anything now, seeing I know you didn't always walk chalk. But say, why didn't you tell me sooner, dad? It would have saved more than one fall-down if I could have made a clean breast of everything, as I will now that I see that you understand." "That was five years ago," said the lawyer, "and never since that day has the boy given his parents an anxious hour. For no matter how pressing have been legal duties, I have always taken time to strengthen the growing confidence on the part of my son. Consequently, he comes to me fearlessly, knowing that sympathy as well as counsel awaits him under all conditions."

By the time the child is eight or ten years of age, if not before, he has become a reader of books and papers, and what he reads begins to make deep and lasting impressions on his soul. Prompt attention to this fact is of the utmost importance, for all the holy influences of the home

and the earnest prayers and counsels of parents can with difficulty withstand the masterful sway of the pictured and printed page with which he is rapidly becoming familiar. The infamously illustrated daily press has already been alluded to, and we have spoken of the heroic work of Anthony Comstock against the unclean literature carried by the mails or otherwise scattered broadcast over the land; but there remains still the necessity of eternal vigilance. The writer witnessed a church official throw down one by one, with a few words of explanation in regard to each, twenty-five publications for children, none, in his judgment, fit to enter a home. But if there are bad books and periodicals, there are also good ones. It will help wonderfully toward solving the problem of religious instruction in the home to put such suitable reading matter within reach of the boys and girls. It is well, of course, to bear in mind that a book does not need to be religious in order to be morally and even spiritually helpful. Moreover, a child must read for other purposes than his religious improvement, and a well-balanced supply of reading need by no means to be predominantly religious. Reading fiction too exclusively makes life unreal, with the interest drawn out so largely to scenes and

events that have no existence, our feelings engaged for people who are less than shadows, laughing and crying over what has no reality whatever. We regret to say that the average Sunday school library does much to foster a taste for fiction. Judging from my own experience, I believe boys generally would prefer truth to fiction. Some children take great delight in reading history, and there is nothing much more wholesome for a child. The twelve-year-old Lisi Cypriani came in the course of her reading to the account of the unfortunate Louis XVIII, and her sympathy and admiration were greatly aroused. In her book, "A Tuscan Childhood," she quotes from her diary kept at that time as follows: "Even on my religion the child king has had a great influence. To see how this child, in spite of bad treatment and all efforts to corrupt him, was always a good Christian and a good son made much more impression on me than the Ancient and the New Testament."

With all this wealth of opportunity for imparting to the child the instruction he needs for his religious up-growth, anything more would hardly seem necessary; yet as the child grows older more systematic teaching may be required. The ground of religious belief needs to be more systematically

explored. It may be suggested that this is done by the Sunday school; but the lessons assigned in the Sunday school are hardly sufficient, being often ill adapted to the needs of the child or above his comprehension. Moreover, the teaching given in the average Sunday school leaves much to be desired. In the day schools the subject of religion is very generally tabooed. There seems to be a real necessity for the home to attempt some form of systematic instruction, either by lessons assigned or by talks or conversations. If a parent should fix upon a round of topics, covering generally the ground of religious truth, and then once a week at least hold a half hour's conversation with his children on a given subject, it would seem to be as effective as anything.

CHAPTER VI

TRAINING

TRAINING is character-building by practice. Character in religion means the establishment of regularity in the religious life. When one's religious life can be depended upon always, everywhere, and under all circumstances, there is character. It is needless to say that the establishment of character is a great end to be sought in the development of the religious life. What would be the use of a transportation service that nobody could depend upon—railroad trains arriving at uncertain hours, letters, express, freight, and passengers delayed, miscarried, perhaps never reaching their destination? Such a service would be practically useless. So is a Christian who cannot be depended upon to go where he ought to go, do what he ought to do, say what he ought to say, and be what he ought to be, always and under all circumstances. You know "just where to find" some people. They are as regular as a clock. They run on schedule time like the trains. They tell the truth, are honest, patient, kind, and faithful, not part of the

time, but all the time. Their character is established.

Character rests largely on habits. Habits are the highways and tracks on which our religious life moves easily and swiftly and with unvarying regularity. We are creatures of habit to a most astonishing extent. The late Professor James asserted that "Ninety-nine one hundredths, or possibly nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of our activity is purely automatic and habitual, from our rising in the morning to our lying down at night." We form our habits, and then our habits rule over us. We are what our habits are; if our habits are good, we are good; if our habits are bad, we are bad. How great then is our responsibility in the forming of our own habits and those of our children!

Habits are established through practice. Putting our religious principles into practice is self-training. Seeing to it that a child puts into practice the religious teaching imparted to him is the religious training of the child. This is a duty that will put our wisdom and patience to the test. Some things indeed require very little attention. They come easy to the child. Others require unceasing watchfulness and tact. They are the things it is hard for the child to remember, things

that go against his grain, or that tax his strength or fortitude. Moreover, there are great differences in children, and these differences are to be studied and made account of. No two children are to be trained just alike, for their needs differ.

All religious instruction should be followed up by careful training along the lines laid down in the instruction, otherwise much religious instruction will go to waste. Parents instruct their children faithfully and then wonder why they go wrong. "We have done everything for that child that we could think of," they say. "We have talked to him until we are almost worn out, and given him all the advice we could, and now see what it all amounts to!" But the important thing has been omitted. The child has had overmuch instruction and no training. This is a very common thing. "The large number of children," says W. G. Koons, "who have become expert in religious knowledge, but have remained irreverent, wicked, and godless, proclaim with solemn voice that instruction is not enough." The child needs training as well as instruction.

How shall we train the child? At the very outset we must see the importance of having the child's willing coöperation in the training. To be of permanent value it must be largely self-

training. What a child does under compulsion does him comparatively little good. It is what he does with a free will that will help him most. Therefore our plan should be, rather, to lead him gently, suggestively, persuasively, than to use compulsion. A child trained to strict obedience only is not well trained. As long as he has the guiding will of some one else to depend upon he may be a model of goodness, but left alone he is helpless and drifts with the prevailing current. He is a good boy at home, where he has somebody to tell him what to do, but left to his own resources at school, college, or in business, he is likely to be weak and defenseless in times of temptation. Even before he goes away from home he is necessarily left a good deal to himself. How much does a parent see of his half-grown boys? Every year the child becomes more and more self-governing, hence the absolute necessity of self-training from the start. He must be trained to do right habitually of his own free will and choice. Our part will be to supervise the process of self-training, give suggestions when positively necessary, call attention to mistakes not observed by the child, and to give encouragement. We are also to provide opportunity for self-training as may be needed, gen-

erally by putting responsibility on the child; then set him a good example, and watch and pray. The less conspicuous our guiding hand the better.

Whatever it may be necessary for us to do should be done quietly, without display, in the simplest and most natural manner possible. Any show of impatience on our part, any nagging, scolding, fretting, sneering, ridicule, complaining, fault-finding, and prophesying of evil, will badly interfere with the work of child-training. One of the brightest boys of my acquaintance was lightly driven away from Christ by an unwise word. He had made a mistake, said or did something he ought not. A little wisdom might have easily restored his balance; but, unfortunately, the sneer was flung at the sensitive young fellow, "A pretty kind of a Christian you are!" It rankled in his soul and made him bitter. Dr. Trumbull thinks that parents might well take some lessons from a dog trainer. "Do not fail to abundantly caress him," is the dog trainer's advice, "and speak kindly words; and never under any circumstances, no matter what the provocation, allow yourself to scold, or [in the early stages] strike him, as this is entirely at variance with our system, and is sure to result in the defeat of our plans. Be very gentle with him at all times."

By what means can we train the child, or, rather, help him to train himself? Every occasion that brings a test of right principle furnishes the opportunity. In his plays, for instance, the child will find an excellent opportunity for self-training. "The play instinct," says Professor Coe, "is nature's way, and so God's way, of developing body, mind, and character. Quickness and accuracy of perception, coördination of the muscles, which puts the body at the prompt service of the mind; rapidity of thought, accuracy of judgment, promptness of decision, self-control, respect for others, the habit of coöperation, self-sacrifice for the good of a group—all these products of true education are called out in plays and games." Here is a broad field for the exercise of all the Christian virtues and graces the child possesses, with the advantage of finding the real self revealed. The excitement of the game brushes aside all pretense, and the real boy or girl appears.

The imitation plays of childhood, in which adult life is reproduced on a small scale, have a peculiar value of their own, being in reality practice exercises by which the child is drilled to take successfully in a few years the same parts in actual life. Thus the little girl with her dolls,

her tea set, and her toy furniture is in training for maternal cares and social life. This training will very often have a moral significance, and furnish opportunity for the practice of religious principles. "This dolly is jealous of that dolly," said one little girl to her father. She was about to enlarge on the subject when her wise father broke in with: "No, no, that dolly isn't jealous; we don't have any jealous people in this house. O, no! That is a mistake to say that any of our dolls are jealous." It was sufficient, and the child never reverted to the subject afterward. More than that, it set up in her soul a lifelong aversion to jealousy as an evil to be carefully avoided. At the play tea table the little hostess is likely to have no end of perplexities and vexations, with the possible result of a rupture of all social relations for a time. But if the mother can put in the right word at the right time, the little girl may win a moral victory that will go far to prepare her for the severer tests sure to come in the actual life. Imitation plays are often intensely real to the child. The writer will never forget the little prayer meeting held by a few small boys, and led by the minister's son. It was as real as any meeting he ever attended. In such a child's play prayer meeting Bishop R. S.

Foster, then a boy of twelve, was converted. He was to read a hymn. As he arose and announced the hymn a sudden conviction fell upon him that he should be something more than a play Christian, and he yielded at once to the Spirit's leading and gave his heart to God. A few years later, at the early age of seventeen, he began his long and eminent ministry.

But aside from plays, the opportunity for a child to practice religious principles is ever present, from the moment he opens his eyes in the morning until he closes them at night. To rise when he is called, to be cheerfully obedient, to be patient under provocation, to be reverent, loving, and obedient to parents, kind and just to all, and in a thousand other ways he may put into practice the religious instruction he has received, and will thereby grow in wisdom, strength, and spiritual stature. The incidents of the daily life not only furnish opportunities for the practice of Christian principles but very frequently turn a flood of new light on them. We learn by doing. One little fellow had learned to pray, but the worth of prayer never came to him so forcibly as it did when he was getting a barrel of shavings upstairs and found himself unable to move a step farther, when he had almost reached the top of

the stairs. He had come to the end of his resources and was in despair. Then he thought, "God can help me," and he cried from his heart, "God, help me." Then, suddenly, new strength came to him, and the work was done. The boy learned a lesson on prayer that he would not soon forget. The important duty of kindness to animals may be learned, according to Margaret E. Sangster, by responsibility for the care of pet animals. She says, "A pet in the house, for the care and comfort of which a boy is responsible, is likely to educate him in this direction quite as thoroughly as will the precepts of his mother." Responsibility for a certain part of the daily work not only trains the hand to accomplish and the mind to be alert, but cultivates also the moral virtues of faithfulness and honesty, and the putting of duty before pleasure.

It is mistaken kindness to relieve the child of all responsibility, to lift him over all the hard places, to tell him all he needs to know, to preserve him from all perplexities, and to fight all his battles for him. It is almost impossible for kind-hearted and sympathetic parents to keep hands off, and let the child grow in moral wisdom and stature by meeting and overcoming without parental aid the conflicts and hard trials

through which he must pass. How could a child learn arithmetic if somebody else worked out all his examples? How can he become a self-reliant Christian when some one else solves all his difficulties, carries all his burdens, fights all his battles, and shields him from every storm? One lad grappled with a hard problem in arithmetic and never let go for three weeks, until at last, with never a word of aid from anyone, the solution came. That struggle and victory made its mark on that boy for life. Such hard-won victories make one self-reliant, strong, courageous. If people do not wish to have their little ones grow up into weak Christians, forever vacillating and unreliable, fearful of heart, and always ready to sink under the troubles and trials of life, let them have the needed experience by which fortitude and self-reliance are cultivated.

As we have seen, right habits are the foundation stones of Christian character. To establish right habits is the purpose of training. It proceeds on the principle that a thing done once is more easily done the second time; if done repeatedly, it becomes a fixed habit, and at length is done with little or no effort, and is as natural as breathing. Some, for instance, are so trained from their youth up that it is almost no effort at

all for them to keep sober, speak the truth, be honest, be generous and kind. The business of the parent is to see that a child does a thing right at first, then does it right again, and often enough to establish a habit. There are three problems: how to keep the child from forming wrong habits; how to get rid of wrong habits; and how to establish right habits.

Some habits are inherited, some are "caught" (all habits being more or less contagious), some are acquired purposely by repeated effort, and some are acquired unintentionally, we know not how. Some habits are good, some bad, and some are neither good nor bad. Bad habits are sinful when in conflict with conscience; if not known to be wrong, they are faults. This distinction is not always clear. Here is a little girl of four that uses profane language. That is a bad habit that should be broken off as soon as possible, but the girl is likely to be quite innocent. Her moral sense is not yet well enough developed to see it clearly as a sin; moreover, she is confused—while her mother tries to correct her, her father, on whose conduct she would never think of sitting in judgment, swears copiously on occasion. It is for the present a bad fault with her rather than a sin. Many of the bad habits of young

children are faults rather than sins. Childish untruthfulness and cruelty have been particularly spoken of by those who have studied the subject as in the class of faults. They are possibly inherited faults that are sometimes soon outgrown. Children's faults are too often condoned, excused even in the presence of the child, even laughed at as something very amusing. But in the meantime the faults are rapidly growing into sins; growing just as fast as the child grows into a responsible moral being. "I would it were possible," says Dr. Randall, "for us to see the danger, the mischief, and the harm of the minor moral defects, if allowed to continue unchecked in our lives; and, first, because these faults are stepping-stones to actual sins. They go before, they prepare the way, they tend to dull the moral sensibilities, and blur the moral vision, so that at last we find ourselves no longer able to discriminate clearly between right and wrong, to draw the line sharply between the high and the low ideal." The following incident from the Sunday School Times illustrates the growth of bad habits. A boy of promise in a business office was expected to file in its proper order every day the incoming mail of the firm. This required some hours and was a tedious task, and the boy conceived a dis-

like for it. He evaded it, postponed it, complained over it, until a habit of shirking his duty grew upon him so that it became almost impossible for him to do anything promptly, and he lost his position. A steady resolution to go through with his duty, however disagreeable it might be, would, instead of spoiling him for a business career, have helped to form in him the splendid business qualities of promptness and reliability so essential to success.

The faulty or sinful habits of childhood, dangerous to the moral and spiritual life, or which interfere with the symmetrical development of the religious nature, are too many to be described or even to attempt to enumerate. Carelessness, thoughtlessness, selfishness, uncontrolled tempers, and lurking habits of untruthfulness or dishonesty are very common. These faults and all others are curable. Never think otherwise. What has been done can be done again. The forces that are for the right are stronger than all that can oppose. To doubt this is to give up the battle and own ourselves defeated. By what power may the victory be gained? First, by the power of a determined will, the child's will reënforced by the parent's will. We have just referred to a boy who spoiled himself for a business career by

allowing a bad habit to grow upon him; there was another boy who took the opposite course. He was a schoolboy to whom algebra was an actual distress The rest of his class had left him far in the rear. He was ashamed to find himself at the foot of the class and likely to remain there. He resolved to master the disagreeable study at all cost. By dint of the hardest kind of digging, in spite of inward revolt, he succeeded, and became one of the two best scholars in his class. It revealed to him the wonderful power that lay in his own will. Few bad habits can hold out against a determined will. When Alice Freeman Palmer was a child she was subject to fits of passion, in which she would throw herself down and beat the floor with her heels in perfect abandon to her feelings. One day she saw her younger brother in a similar paroxysm of rage, and she was horrified. She determined she would never be angry again, and by the strength of her will she conquered.

Another force, that sometimes works like magic, is suggestion. The object of suggestion is to free the mind of wrong and pernicious thoughts, which are, so to say, the roots that keep the bad habit alive. Dr. Boris Sidis, in his "Psychology of Suggestion," gives several in-

stances of persistent bad mental and physical habits entirely cured by first finding the root ideas, and then expelling them from the mind. These were cases that could be successfully treated only by a trained physician and scientist, but the same principle holds good in a multitude of instances easily within the power of the parent, or of the child himself. An instance was given in the chapter on "Suggestion" of a boy who was considered by everybody, his own mother not excepted, as bad, untrustworthy, incorrigible. The boy himself naturally shared this opinion. When these mischievous ideas, these poisonous roots of evil, were expelled from the mind he became a different boy. As a boy thinketh in his heart so is he. Keep his thoughts pure, true, cheerful, and hopeful. Never let him think there is any badness in him which he "can't help."

In this connection it may be said that it is easier to break up a bad habit by approaching it indirectly rather than by assailing it directly. It is better to be a switchman and quietly put the child upon another track than to meet him in a head-on collision. Has a child fallen into selfish ways, it is better to study how we can interest him in helping others rather than to make war on the evil habit with commandments, threatenings, and

penalties. Very often one of the best ways to fight an evil habit is to say nothing about it, but concentrate all thought and effort in cultivating the opposite good habit (for every evil has its opposite good), and then, as the new spring buds of the white oak push off the old brown leaves, which all the winds and storms of winter could not force from the tree, so will the new right habit quietly push off the old bad habit and take its place.

Prevention is, of course, better than any kind of cure. Many evil habits would never have grown upon the child had we exercised proper care. Possibly most of his bad habits date back to infancy. That is the period when the fond parent is particularly blind, and when it is almost impossible to discern any taint of badness in the innocent little ones. Everything the little one does is "so cunning," and "who can help laughing" at his naughty pranks. Pretty soon, however, the laugh dies down to a wail of despair when the parents discover too late that their child is bound hand and foot by these "ways" once so "cunning" but now grown coarse, strong, and evil. A little good sense in training the infant saves much heartbreak in later years. A little fire is easily quenched, how soon is it beyond all

control! A child's hand can stop the first little break in the levee; uncared for, it becomes a flood inundating whole counties.

But there is something more to child-training than fighting bad habits; indeed, it is better, on the whole, to think more about cultivating the good than it is to think about destroying the evil. The business of the farmer is to raise corn, not to kill weeds. Killing weeds is incidental; growing a good crop of corn is the main thing. Training for good habits is the main thing. What wisdom will it require to train the child in all the habits that belong to the moral and spiritual life, that found and establish the highest and best Christian character!—right habits of thinking, right habits of feeling, and right habits of speaking and acting. There are habits of spiritual nurture, as prayer, devotional reading, reflection, church attendance, etc. There are habits of self-control, self-sacrifice, fearlessness in the right, trustworthiness, truth, honesty, and loyalty to duty; habits of sympathy for others, kindness, generosity; habits of patience with others, of overlooking faults, of forgiving wrongs, of returning good for evil; habits of cheerfulness, of always looking on the bright side, of making the best of everything.

There should be training for Christian service. The Christian life is altruistic in the highest and best sense. The spirit of Jesus is self-sacrifice in behalf of others. The true disciple has the Master's spirit. But often his good purpose is hindered and comes to naught for the lack of trained insight, and of readiness that comes from habit. Thousands would be helpful, but they have never learned how. They have never been trained to recognize opportunity when they meet it, nor trained to wise, tactful, gracious helpfulness. The time for this training is childhood. First of all, it should be understood that we do not have to invent any benevolent work for the young Christian. In his own circle, in the events of his daily life in association with his parents and young companions, there are ample opportunities for Christian service. Every day of his life somebody needs his help. It may be a very trifling service that is called for, nothing to attract notice, without glamour or glory; but, trifling as it may be, if rendered lovingly, in the spirit of Jesus, it has its moral worth, it makes for Christ-likeness. This is better than any artificial scheme of benevolence, far removed from the child's natural interests. We can well believe that some children would prefer to be smartly dressed, and

march off with a handsome bouquet of flowers for the "shut-ins." There is no objection to a child doing that, but it should not assume too high a value; it is only one little thing, and a hundred more there are that should not be left undone. There is a danger of Pharisaic pride mingling with our welldoing. Almost all of our Christlike service is without observation; nobody notices, nobody admires, nobody even says "Thank you." There is, for instance, very little earthly glory in Mabel's staying at home to help her mother, when she is eager to join her companions; or for John to give up a good time to minister to the joy and comfort of a little brother; or for Annette to say a few kind words to a desolate, homesick child, a stranger whom no one knows or notices, or for Robert to come to the defense of the miserable victim of some tormenting bully; but life is crowded full of such golden opportunities for Christlike service. These humble, unnoticed, unpraised ministrations of love are the very warp and woof of our religion, and should have a large place in the training of the Christian child.

CHAPTER VII

HOME GOVERNMENT

THE subject of home government will be considered only so far as it bears on the religious development of the children. Admittedly the right government of the home is one of the most perplexing problems the parent has to meet. Few parents are born managers, and fewer yet have had any special training for their important office. Wrong methods are handed down from one generation of parents to another until the well-ordered home has become the exception. We can hardly think of anything so influential for evil to the child as a mismanaged home, while a well-managed home, on the other hand, is equally influential for good. It is for parents to study well the art of good home government if they would have their children grow up right and good.

It should be recognized, first of all, that the home is not an absolute monarchy, with a Czar at its head, but a little republic, in which all are citizens, sharing, each according to his ability, in the ordering of the home. Under such a government it is everybody's duty, from the

father president down, to be a good citizen, keep within his rights, keep the peace, and help enforce the law. Thus bearing a share in the responsibility for good government, the younger citizens of the home republic are being prepared for the larger citizenship of the State, and for citizenship in the kingdom of God. Hereby the child learns the value of obedience, learns self-control, learns also to know the love behind all law, discovers the worth of order, finds application for the Golden Rule, and tastes the blessedness of forgiving and being forgiven.

The law of the home is love, the love that reaches upward toward God and goes forth in kindliness to all God's creatures; love revealing itself in the home in kindly rule and in glad obedience, in gentle customs and courteous manners, in thoughtful consideration one for another and care for each other, in patience one with the other, in ready forgiveness, and in just dealing. In such a home where love rules the child would "grow as the lily." The climate would be good and the soil favorable for the cultivation of "plants of righteousness."

But too often the home life is jangled and discordant; the rule of the parent either arbitrary and harsh, or weak and vacillating; the children

stubborn, irreverent, and disobedient. For a parent to assume that his will is the sole authority in the home is a crime against the home, as the assumption of imperial authority by our President would be a crime against the state. Yet well-meaning parents make exactly this mistake and then innocently wonder at the sad inevitable consequences. It is well for parents to remember that instead of being an original fountain of authority, parenthood is a divine institution, and the parent only God's minister to rule according to the laws God has provided, and as one who must give an account of his stewardship. Practically the wisest parents make very little show of authority, but rule most effectually by fine management. The assertion of the arbitrary will in the home alienates the child's natural regard for the parent, destroys the parent's influence over the child, and drives him to seek more congenial associations than those of home. Thus the good influences that the home should exert are dissipated, and replaced by such influences as the child may choose.

Self-government is the ideal to be sought. That is the ideal State where each citizen directs his own life in the right way. He violates no law, for the law is written within him. If all laws

were repealed, he would go on his way doing right just the same. It is so in the ideal home. This state is not attained by brute force but by a divine art. The great point in home government is to make the child self-governing. "Moral training," says Professor Rugh, "has not done its perfect work until it has made teacher, parent, and statute unnecessary."

Some parents are disposed to place too high a value on enforced obedience. A soldier's unquestioning obedience to his officer is their ideal. The boy that stood on the burning deck, and died rather than disobey his father, is a shining example. But no enforced obedience is of any high moral worth. When left to himself in the exigencies of life the child trained only to follow another's will is all at sea, confused and lost. "What," says one, "are we not to make our children mind? I thought that was what parents were for." There may indeed be times when a child must be made to mind, forced to mind; but those are exceptional times, occasions when there is no time for explanations, when obedience must be instantaneous and unquestioned. But, as a rule, the child should be so brought up that he may be trusted to see the right and choose it of his own accord. "The child," says William G.

Jordan, "is not likely to become self-directing if he is taught to be dependent ever on the direction of some one else, if he is taught only self-suppression, surrendering submissively to another's will, responding not to his own reason, the dictates of his own judgment, moved ever from without instead of being inspired to move from within." There are ways of managing children without assuming authority, without using force or threatening. The gentle Quaker mother's "Hadn't thee better" was far more effective than blustering, loud orders, with dire threatenings, and the rod of correction in sight. Carmen Sylva, in referring to her own bringing up, says, "As far as devotion to duty is concerned, it was taught us by means of very little tasks and very small sacrifices; these were repeated daily, and were always prefaced by 'You may' instead of 'You must.'" Some parents are born with a gift of management, some acquire it through much self-denial and patience, and some poor souls neither have it nor care to get it. One such mother despaired of her daughter, Susie, and sent her away to one of her friends who had the heavenly gift. Susie was fourteen and utterly beyond her parents. She would be on the streets, and she would not wash dishes. Her distracted mother

tried every new theory she heard of to influence the child, and her father used the rod, but Susie defied them both. But in the new home from the very first she not only washed the dishes, but of her own accord washed a part of her own clothes, and sang merrily the while.

"Susie," said her hostess one day, "I believe you like to do things."

"Yes'm," she laughed.

"Why didn't you do so at home?"

Her face clouded. "Mother nags me. She stands right by and makes me do it her way."

A letter to the mother made it possible for Susie to live a different life at home upon her return. What did this gifted manager of children do to work this wonderful cure? Nothing much. It was partly what she didn't do. It was the contact of a fine soul full of intelligent sympathy, with a few words of appreciation now and then. It needs the artistic sense to manage children as much as to paint pictures, and the artist's fine touch to do always just the right thing, no more, no less than is required to produce the desired effect. Under the same artistic spirit that changed the obstinate and rebellious Susie into a willing, obedient, and loving girl, came a bad boy that father and mother could no

longer manage; a boy that growled when asked to do anything, complained of his food, and acted dreadfully at table. He came simply to spend the Fourth of July, but found it so like a boy's dream of paradise that he stayed all summer. His hostess reported of him that not once was he impertinent, not once did he complain of his food. He kept his room tidy, helped cheerfully about the house, and even tried to sew on his buttons and mend his clothes. Once he fretted a little about washing the dishes, and his hostess said, simply, "Getting tired of staying with me, Tommy?" There was no answer, but there was no more fretting. When the visit was over the wise hostess did not omit to tell him what a nice little gentleman he had been, and to express the hope that he was just like that at home. She then gave him a cordial invitation to come again. We can well imagine that Tommy never forgot those beautiful two months when he was neither whipped, threatened, driven, nor scolded, but by some unseen guidance was led to do right of his own accord, and really enjoyed doing right. "She governed by a strange influence, so that we never thought we were governed at all," said Cyrus Hamlin of an older sister's management of himself and his brother. Under such home

government the religious life develops unhindered, while it is discouraged and perverted when the home government is devoid of sense and reason.

Many times friction arises from the fact that the child is not given any reason for a given requirement. Naturally he cannot know or appreciate all the reasons that are in our mind. It is not necessary that he should. But it will be a great satisfaction to him if he knows only a part. He will yield much more readily if he sees even but a hint of a good reason back of the suggested duty. And it ought to be given him; it is his right. The child is no mere unreasoning beast, but a spark of the divine reason glows within him, and his "Why," is a cry out of the depths of nature which cannot be disregarded without peril. Professor Rugh says: "If we have reasons sufficient for asking a child to do a thing, we need not be afraid to give them. If we cannot give them, or the child cannot grasp them, we may at least doubt the wisdom of asking the child to do the thing at this time." By controlling a child through his reason we cultivate that reason, and thus bring him up to be self-governing. To insist on blind obedience is to leave the self-governing reason undeveloped. "Forcing

the selfish child to divide its cake with its brother," says Mr. Jordan, "may result in obedience. The act may be controlled, but the character is not improved. The insistence on obedience does not go deep enough; it is merely cutting off the tops of the weeds, leaving the vitality in their roots to persist and increase. Until the child is taught to see the wrong of selfishness, the pettiness, meanness, and injustice of it, until it is brought by a change of impulse from within to share voluntarily, there has been no real improvement." "How then," the parent may ask, "can the child be trained aright?" Mr. Jordan would answer as follows: "By the establishing of friendship and loving companionship with the child; by seeking to see its acts from the child's viewpoint; by appealing to its reason; by substituting suggestion for command; by example and proper environment rather than by nagging precept; by strengthening its inner convictions and teaching it to learn by practice."

"I well remember," says the Rev. Robert Collyer, "saying to my dear old father in the faith, Dr. Furness, 'Do tell me how you managed to raise your children to such a lovely purpose. I should like you to tell me the secret.' 'It is no secret,' said he, 'and very simple; we turned those

words of Paul the other way about where he says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for that is right," and made it read, "Parents obey your children"; and the new version answered to a charm.'" A great principle underlies this playful answer. The fellowship of love in that home made parents and children so one in mind and heart that unconsciously all chose to do that which would be pleasing to the others. It was like the ideal union of husband and wife, where any question of precedence and authority is not even thought of.

Some mothers spoil their children by too close oversight, under which no child can develop naturally or ever do his best, being practically smothered by maternal solicitude. Some mothers cannot rest easy in their minds if they do not follow up the child in the smallest matters, and hold him often under the microscope, like a fly impaled on a needle, to seek out his minutest faults. The consequences are often very painful and always disappointing.

Discipline has an important bearing on the development of the religious life. How may we correct the child when he falls into erroneous ways and not hinder but, rather, advance his moral and spiritual growth? This is a problem

that seems to be hard to solve if we are to judge by the multitude of the failures. It would clear the atmosphere somewhat to remember always the purpose of correction. It is not, as some appear to think, to assert or to maintain parental authority; certainly it is not to take revenge on the child. Imagine a parent charging upon his little faulty child like a warhorse rushing into battle, and shouting, "I'll let you know who is master here," or crying out in hot anger, "I'll make you pay for this, young man." This is to travesty home government, and throw all good parental influence to the winds. The object of parental correction is the restoration of the erring child to his moral balance. He is like a baby learning to walk, who loses his balance and falls. As we hasten to pick up the little one and stand him on his feet again, so, with equal kindness and patience, we are to come to the rescue of the erring one and restore his uprightness, restore him to loyalty to the law of love with a higher and truer purpose than before. Rightly made use of, the mistakes and errors of the child may only prove opportunities to help him upward to a higher and better life. Professor Rugh says that discipline and punishment are teaching processes, as much as are grammar and arithmetic lessons,

and because the child's errors show where he specially needs help, we may even welcome the occasions for discipline. Not that we are glad to see the child go wrong, but glad to find the weak points in his character, that we may lead him to strength. It will be a happy day for teachers and parents when they can adopt this view, and thus, instead of being irritated by the child's faults, welcome the opportunity they offer for kindly service in helping the erring one to a nobler life.

With this object in view all correction will be given in the spirit of sympathy and kindness, and never in the spirit of anger and revenge. Corporal punishments and severe penalties will seldom be needed; they too often harden the child rather than help him. It is most unfortunate whenever a parent or a teacher is not able to think of any better way of correcting faults. The birchen rod in the schoolmaster's hand is a reflection on his intelligence. Scolding and threatening are never once to be thought of, much less the wearying fine rain of constant complaint and fault-finding. These things do no good whatever, but harm always. As we have suggested, the parent is to be an artist, not, like Michael Angelo, bringing from the marble block an angel indeed, but an angel without life, but fashioning

living and growing souls into sons of God. The way some parents go at it is like trying to pound out an angel with a sledge hammer.

Unless carefully managed disciplinary correction may produce feelings in the child that will harm if not destroy the religious life. The effect of correction should never be to alienate the child from its parent. Any taint of injustice in the parent's dealing is sure to do this, as indeed any wrong spirit whatever, or any wrong methods like continuous fault-finding, nagging, hectoring, blustering, domineering, or over severity. Alienation from father and mother is quite regularly followed by alienation from God. How can a child revere and love God whom he hath not seen if he revere and love not the parent he hath seen?

A discipline that produces fear, a government that rules through fear, are mistakes. It may seem the cheapest method. It doesn't take much effort to put little children in fear and thus compel them to do one's will. "Fear," says Professor Kirkpatrick, "is so powerful an instinct in children that by means of it they may be made to do almost anything." Yet some foolish parents take a kind of pride in the fear they are able to inspire. Here is a father who boasts, "My chil-

dren do as I tell them; they don't dare to do any other way, for they know what they will get if they do." Such a father has misconceived his parental responsibility and does his little ones irreparable harm. "Fear in the sense of a strong, paralyzing emotion," says Professor Kirkpatrick, "is injurious physically, stupefying mentally, and degenerative morally. It makes one's life miserable, weak, unworthy. Every effort should therefore be made to eradicate it." One of the worst effects of fear is the mental confusion it causes and the consequent demoralization of the child's governing faculties. The scared child is irresponsible. Fear breaks down his best intentions and unsettles his established habits. It drives him to lying, deceit, and concealment. It brings a reaction of recklessness. For all these effects the child is held accountable and punished accordingly. Thus the rule of fear goes on from bad to worse. "Perfect love casteth out fear." This is the ideal for the children of God; it is also the ideal for the children of men. The best religious development of the child is possible only under the rule of love.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOLY SPIRIT

In all our discussion of methods in the preceding chapters we have never for one moment forgotten that more than human wisdom and ability is needed in securing the right development of the religious nature of the child; nor have we for one moment forgotten that all lack on our part is amply provided for in the grace of God. That God's Spirit works in us, giving light, inspiration, and strength, and works in coöperation with us, giving guidance and support, is plainly taught in the Scriptures and has been proved to the satisfaction of Christian people times without number. In the nineteen centuries of Christian history God's children have become very familiar with this divine assistance, and have learned to rely upon it as confidently as the farmer relies on God's sunshine and rain. Being as common as daylight, and as safely to be depended upon, it can hardly be considered miraculous. It is a law of God's working just as gravitation is. Sometimes, indeed, the effect seems to touch upon the marvelous, as when by the Spirit's power a

hardened sinner is suddenly converted. We call it a miracle of grace, but it is not a miracle; it is only a marked instance of what God's Spirit is doing all the time. Not only is the working of God's Spirit one of the common forces that enter human life, but it will be found that the Spirit works in us and with us along the lines of natural law, just as God's power works in the external world. God turns the wheels of the mill, but he does it in and through the law of gravitation. God transforms a soul into his own likeness, but he does it working along the lines of natural law. In his excellent work on "Early Religious Education" the Rev. W. G. Eliot says, "The divine Spirit, working through parental agency, silently effects the regeneration of the soul." Again he speaks of the "unseen, unobserved influences of God's Spirit, which works together with our spirits, and in accordance with the laws of our own mind."

The work of the Holy Spirit in coöperation with every right effort on our part for the religious development of our children begins as early as we begin. He hears and answers the very first cry of the mother's heart for the new young life committed to her charge. What does God do for parents and their children through his

Holy Spirit? It would be impossible to tell it all, but, in short, everything needed and sincerely asked for. Does the parent feel the need of a more thorough Christian life, fuller, richer, deeper? The Spirit is at hand to work with him mightily to that end. Does he need wisdom? He giveth to all liberally. Or guidance? "He will guide you." Or patience in trial, deliverance from temptation, help in special need? "Ask, and ye shall receive." If you know how to give good gifts to your children, "how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" No parent should dream of bringing up a child in the life of God without the Holy Spirit's help at every step. What will God do through his Spirit for the child? Whatever the child needs; whatever we ask, whatever the child asks. When the little cry goes up, "Help me to be good," there is help. It may seem strange and inexplicable to some, but, as many can testify, it is one of the most real things in life. Why must we ask that we may receive the priceless boon of the Spirit's help? For the same reason that the farmer must plow and sow if he would reap. Divine coöperation with human effort is the invariable rule in everything.

"Regeneration" is a word used as a name for

the work of the Holy Spirit (coöperating with us) in changing what needs to be changed in our natures to conform us wholly to God. It is usually a long process, though sometimes great changes are effected very quickly. With a child the regenerative work of God's Spirit begins undoubtedly as soon as we begin to care for, work for, pray for, the child's right development in the religious life. It never ceases as long as the Spirit finds anything to coöperate with. With faithfulness on our part there is no reason why we should not see our children, slowly or swiftly, being transformed by the silent inworking of the Spirit into the likeness of the sons of God.

There is another word, "conversion," used to express the turning of a soul from the life of sin to a life of devotion to God; a turning effected by the help of God's Spirit. In the case of adults the turning point is often very marked; sometimes the very day and hour are noted and remembered. It is not necessarily thus marked, and it is not in a great number of instances; possibly as many cannot give the date of their conversion as those who can. With religiously brought up children there is generally no such marked point of turning. Many grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord from their earliest

days, and cannot remember any time when they were not the spiritual children of God. With children who begin the Christian life after full consciousness arrives it is very much as it is with adults—with some conversion is marked, with others it is not. In reality, it is of no importance whatever which way it is. Unfortunately, some people are great sticklers for a distinct conversion with at least an approximate date. If a child has been brought up in the love of God from his mother's womb, these people will still ask, "But has he really been converted?" And they can never understand it if you answer that he never needed to be converted.

"In the Christian family," said the late Dr. Borden P. Bowne, "the aim should be, not conversion, but to bring the children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and the necessity of conversion, or a turning from sin to God and righteousness, hints strongly at parental failure either to grasp the truth of the gospel or to realize it in the family life." There comes, of course, an end of infancy, and with it the dawning of self-conscious life, a period when the child makes his own conscious choices, and in which he consciously chooses God; but this period cannot be dated, it dawns too gradually. "We may not

be able," says the Rev. W. G. Eliot, "to mark the time of conscious self-consecration to God, nor to observe the steps by which the will is brought to it; but the result is none the less sure, the change effected none the less real."

The experience of Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, given in the dedication of his book, "The Crises of the Christ," is a good illustration of the quiet but effectual working of the Holy Spirit in coöperation with parental effort. Dr. Morgan says: "To my father and mother, who forty years ago gave me to Christ, and who, never doubting the acceptance by him of their child, did from infancy and through youth train me as his; from whom I received my first knowledge of him, so that when the necessity came for my personal choosing, so did I recognize the claims of his love, that without revulsion, and hardly knowing when, I yielded to him my allegiance and my love, devoting spirit, soul, and body to his sweet will and glad service." Bishop J. E. Robinson, commenting on this testimony, says: "This dedication seems to me beautifully to set forth in brief form the philosophy of the ideal Christian nurture and discipleship. Multitudes of Christian parents have proved its soundness and validity. If the writer may be permitted a personal testi-

mony, it would be that the children given him by God were taught by their parents from infancy that, having been redeemed by the sacrifice of the cross, they belonged to the kingdom of God and to the Lord Jesus Christ. With the dawn and increase of intelligence they came to see that it was their obligation and privilege to recognize his claim to their trust, love, and obedience, and to become partakers in him of the priceless blessings of discipleship. Just when the indispensable personal choice of Christ as Saviour and Lord took place neither parents nor children (one possibly excepted) could tell. But it is an unspeakable joy to record, with deepest gratitude to the heavenly Father, that not one of those six chidren has known the bitterness and bondage of Satan's service for a single hour of their lives. Some have consecrated their lives unreservedly to missionary service, one or two are preparing for that service, all have been definitely and unmistakably on the Lord's side from their earliest years."

It is possible, after all that has been said, that some may fail to recognize the work of the Spirit in the gradual unfolding of the religious life under the educational method, seeing only the human factors and the working of natural law.

But let us repeat with emphasis, not one step of progress in the religious development of the child has been made without the indispensable help of God's Holy Spirit; and he who cannot remember a day in his life that he did not love God is as surely born of the Spirit as he who is brought suddenly and instantaneously from the darkness of sin into the light of God.

This counting the little ones as belonging to God, and training them in his love from the very beginning of life, is the ideal method; but the great majority of children are not brought up in this manner. Their religious education has been either entirely neglected, or has received insufficient attention, or they have been given unwise instruction and training, the probable result in either case being that the child passes into the period of full consciousness without the sweet assurance of being God's child, but, on the contrary, sooner or later becoming aware of the bondage of sin. It would be a very great mistake to ignore these facts. It is a mistake to tell children they are good when they know it is not so. If the Holy Spirit puts conviction of sin on the conscience of a child, there is only one way of relief: he must turn from his sin unto God, who forgives and heals. All flattering comforts that

leave the child in his sin are worse than vain, they are wicked. How unwise, for instance, to say in his presence, "This child is too young to be a sinner," or, "Children of this age are perfectly innocent"! The trouble is, the child knows better. He knows very well that he has done wrong, and to pronounce him innocent when he himself knows he is bad is to confuse his moral sense. The child's conscience, that approves when he is right and disapproves when he is wrong, is of too priceless value to be smothered, confused, and perverted. It is the compass by which the ship is to be steered. It is the inward monitor on which we are to depend for moral guidance. We cannot be too careful of the child's sense of right and wrong.

Some people imagine that a little child can have no conviction of sin, hence is incapable of conversion, needs no conversion, no repentance of sin and seeking unto God for forgiveness of sin and a new heart. This is a great mistake. Facts of experience prove to the contrary. It has been made evident that children of tender years can have sometimes a very keen sense of their ill desert and need of God's pardon. Even as early as four or five years of age children have been brought under deep conviction and, accord-

ing to all accounts, soundly converted. Jonathan Edwards tells of a little girl of four who passed through deep conviction and a prolonged struggle in prayer to a clear sense of God's forgiving love. No adult could have had a more marked conversion. "From this time," says Edwards, "there has appeared a very remarkable abiding change in the child." She lived an eminently useful life, and died triumphantly at the age of about seventy." It was doubtless the tremendous emphasis once placed on sin, and laid by the ministry on young and old alike, that led to such poignant conviction on the part of young children. Perhaps also the theological teaching of the day had something to do with it, making sin seem more awful and God farther off and harder to be reached. This might account for the child's desperate and prolonged struggle. We are not saying that Jonathan Edwards's way is the best way, although it led hundreds of young children to God. There is indeed, so we think, a much better way, of which we have spoken in part and will have something more to say. The point made here is that if children are not brought up from birth as children of God, they may have a keen conviction of sin, and may be, and need to be, turned from sin to God, in other

words, converted. The Rev. E. P. Hammond, "the children's evangelist," relates many incidents like the above occurring under his labors, where young children had marked conversions, beginning with deep conviction of sin and need of pardon, followed by earnest struggle in consecration and prayer, terminating in a happy assurance of sins forgiven and a new life of love begun in the soul; in short, all the experiences testified to as occurring in many adult conversions. Such methods of child conversion are possible, and it is useless to deny it. And who can doubt that it is better that a little girl of four should pass through such an ordeal as Edwards describes in order to find saving grace than for her to be put off with, "You are too young to understand these things; you better go and play"?

But whether it is the best way is another thing. The consensus of opinion at the present day is that it is better to appeal to a child's affections rather than to his fears, better to draw the child by awakening his desires for goodness than to drive him to Christ by awakening a sense of sin and a fear of judgment to come. At the present day opinion is decidedly in favor of mild and gentle methods with children of tender years, winning them with kindness rather than by try-

ing to force upon them the views and experiences of adult years. The aim is, rather, to a gradual unfolding of the religious nature than to distinctly marked conversions. It has been found that even children brought up under the worst possible conditions will respond quickly to right impulses in an atmosphere of Christian love. It will be understood that we have been speaking of very young children. In the years of adolescence, from eleven or twelve and upward, the religious experience becomes increasingly like the adult type. The sense of sin and need of God's grace naturally becomes clearer; there will be more of a struggle to submit all to God and to trust him for forgiving love and his grace to help, and, consequently, a more lively sense of satisfaction, of the "joys of salvation," when the conflict is over.

The experience of Hugh Price Hughes, when a boy of thirteen, illustrates one type of boyish conversion. He was brought under deep conviction by the Holy Spirit, but he could not find the way of salvation. He struggled on in the darkness until an American preacher came to preach at the chapel; then, as the minister spoke concerning God's love in Christ, a new light broke upon him; he saw the way of full submission and

trust as he never had before. He followed the new light, and at once "the scales of fear and doubt fell from the boy's eyes, and he felt the love of God like a great wave of sunlight flooding his soul." That was an experience he never could forget. It was an experience that colored and molded his whole life. But a conversion of this sort is no better than a quiet dawning of a new life, unmarked by any sudden influx of light and glory. There will always be the two types of experience among children as among adults. The clearer the light, and the simpler the teaching, the less probability of abrupt and marked experiences.

Whatever our method of educating religiously our children, we are sure of the coöperation of God's Spirit. Yet it is more than probable that the Spirit can work to better advantage and to better success if our methods are wise than if unwise. It is for us to find the best way of working, and follow it, trusting in God for his gracious coöperation. We must not forget to ask that we may receive, for our prayer is the connecting wire between our working and the divine source of power. So God has fixed it, and it is not best to ask why, but to go on and use God's plan, only thankful he has made it so easy for us. In

addressing a meeting of mothers, the late Dr. Howard Crosby said he believed the conversion of children rested in the hands of their parents, and that it was according to their faith. He referred to two families of his acquaintance in the city of New York. Each family had brought up a large family of children, surrounding them with similar religious influences. In one family every child had grown up strong in Christ, while in the other not one had been converted. Once, speaking to the mother of this family on the duty of the salvation of her children, Dr. Crosby called attention to the gracious promises of God that bore on the case in hand. She replied, "O, yes, I know he has given these promises, but—there are so many exceptions." "Madam," said Dr. Crosby, "here is the secret of your children's condition out of Christ."

In contrast with this lack of faith in the one instance stands out in splendid clearness the undoubting confidence of the other. A friend met the father of the first family named walking in the street with his four little boys, and said to him, "When you look at these little ones and think of their future don't you feel anxious?" "No," replied the father, "I know they will all be saved; and, besides this, I know they will

all be converted in childhood." According to his faith it was unto him; for while still in childhood they all gave their hearts to God. This is only one among thousands of instances where the promise has been found to hold good. Not the least element of successful religious education is the mother's prayer or the father's prayer. The iron link that shackles a railroad train to the locomotive is just an insignificant bit of metal with no power in itself, but without it the train cannot move. The engine is strong enough and stands ready on the track, but nothing moves until the obscure bit of iron is in its place. There is power in the Holy Spirit to convert all our children; only the prayer of faith is needed to make the connection.

Though the golden period of infancy has been passed in parental neglect, still there is hope. The best opportunity is gone, but all is not lost. God's Spirit can help us yet. The mischief of our neglect may never be wholly repaired, but the child may yet be saved. The danger of his being lost from God increases every hour, and the parent must pray harder, be more in earnest, have more faith. The testimony of one woman who was left a widow with three young daughters is in point. The victory was won when she began to

pray desperately. She says, "I had an uncommon burden for the conversion of my children. I retired every evening to my room for prayer on this subject. I did not expect an immediate answer, yet it was but a short time before they were all converted by the quiet leading of the Spirit." Sometimes indeed this cry for the Spirit's help is about all the resource the parent has; but even in such a case, when all else has failed, the parent need not despair. The greatest and best resource of all is still left. The Holy Spirit is infinite. The Spirit can reach the prodigal wherever he wanders. The Spirit's resources are inexhaustible; he will find a way to work which we would never think of; he will work miracles of salvation when we least expect it.

From the beginning to the end the development of the religious life of the child is his work; we are but his agents. He does not want us to worry; worry never does any good, but he does want us to keep in close touch with him. Without him we can do nothing; but if we abide in him and he in us, all things will be possible; our work will not fail nor our prayers be unanswered.

CHAPTER IX

PERSONALITY

THERE are elements in the make-up of a child's personality that will affect the development of the religious life, sometimes very seriously, occasionally, as we shall see, actually preventing any religious development whatever. To manage the personality of the child so that it shall in no wise hinder but, rather, help the religious life demands most careful study of the individual child, and sometimes heroic treatment. We will look first at the physical basis.

THE PHYSICAL BASIS

If the body stands in the lowest place in our personal make-up, it is not, therefore, of slight importance, or to be neglected with impunity. It seems almost incredible that only a slight physical defect can make the difference between high Christian character and a life of crime. Nevertheless, it is true. "A clot of blood," says Professor Roark, "no larger than a wheat grain, or a minute splinter of bone from the skull, pressing on the surface of the brain, is sufficient to change a man of culture into an ignoramus, or

one of eminent character into a moral wreck." Even the common and everyday physical discomforts of weariness, hunger, thirst, cold, or heat, aches and pains, too often extend a harmful influence over the moral and spiritual life. Everyone knows how hard it is to keep on a high level of sweet and beautiful living when we are utterly fagged out or tortured with aching nerves. Hunger has been known to turn saints into something very unlike the angels. Midsummer's heat makes large drafts on various holy tempers and graces, and the oxygenless atmosphere of the prayer room has not infrequently fallen like a pall on the assembled worshipers. If these conditions of the physical man have such influences with grown-up people, we may well be considerate with our little ones. To give relief from the physical discomfort when possible, is often the best thing we can do for them, and it will sometimes work like magic. There is, of course, another side to this question not to be ignored by parent or child: it is a great part of the discipline of life to obtain the mastery of the body and be good in spite of it. "I keep my body under," said Paul. "Every day of my life," says Carmen Sylva, who was brought up to the sternest self-denial, "I thank my mother for my

Spartanlike rearing, which has become the discipline of my entire life." It is deemed a great victory for a grown-up person—a mother, for instance—to keep patient and cheery, sweet in temper and kindly in speech, when ready to drop for weariness, or under the torture of aching nerves; it is a victory equaled only by that of a child who remains triumphantly good in similar circumstances.

There are other and more serious things to interfere with the mental and moral life. Several instances have occurred similar to the following, reported by Dr. Bernard Hollander, a well-known British alienist, where a boy of sixteen, given to lying, stealing, violence, and general criminality, was restored to normal morality by the removal of a slip of a bone from his skull. Glandular growths, obstructing respiration, or pressing on the brain, are responsible for numberless instances of mental inferiority and moral obliquity. Superintendent Maxwell, of New York, is reported to have said that probably seventy-five thousand of the school children of that city suffered from such growths; and states the effect to be that a child thus afflicted falls into a condition of discomfort that makes study impossible, and leads gradually to the impulsive

foundation of habits of cruelty and vice. The removal of such growths is a simple matter and often brings about a wonderful improvement. There are cases where only a surgeon's knife can answer the mother's prayers and make a bad child good.

Time would fail to speak of the many minor physical defects that have more to do with moral failures than we are aware of. The most astonishing facts are coming to light in regard to the prevalence of defective eyesight and hearing, of malnutrition and defective teeth, and their evil effects on the mental and moral life. It seems strange to find the root of bad behavior in a crooked tooth, but the crooked tooth prevented mastication, and thus prevented nutrition, and the result is a lack of moral as well as mental force. Under just such an affliction one little girl degenerated into a "hopeless liar." Character is more closely related to the stomach than many are aware. "The badly fed, or the underfed, baby," says John Spargo, "quickly departs from the normal; imbecility, crime, pauperism are all directly or indirectly due to lack of food, or to its poor quality during the plastic years." Many are the child's shortcomings due to defective hearing, instruction and directions being half

heard or entirely misunderstood. To look well to the care of the body is a religious duty; a duty for the parent and a duty to be laid upon the child.

There are also bad physical habits that are exceedingly detrimental to the development of the religious life. The cigarette habit is a deep offender. It directly affects the brain, weakens the mental grasp, enfeebles the will. In an experiment in a Kansas agricultural college with fifty cigarette boys and fifty nonsmokers eighty-one per cent of the failures in studies were made by the smokers. One railroad official, who had two hundred men in his employ, declared that eighty-five per cent of the mistakes occurring in the office were traceable to the thirty-two smokers. Judge Ben Lindsey says, "I have been in the juvenile court nearly ten years, and in that time I have had to deal with thousands and thousands of boys who have disgraced themselves and their parents, and who have brought sorrow and misery into their lives, and I do not know of any one habit that is more responsible for the troubles of these boys than the vile cigarette habit." As for the habit of alcoholic drink, it is too fearfully ruinous in its effects to need mention, only some good mothers are so purblindly careless.

It is unfortunately true that many Christian people in this day of enlightenment still use intoxicants; and the use of "soothing syrups" to drug babies to sleep, and the use of the mischievous patent medicine for all the ills of humanity, are too common to speak of. It is a dangerous playing with fire that is likely to burst forth suddenly into a conflagration that will leave the home a blackened ruin.

Taking good care of the body is to heap up capital that will pay a wonderful percentage in the moral and spiritual life. "You can't have character," says Dr. Welzmiller, "without good muscles. Soft muscular development carries with it a lack of fitness, of vitality. You can see it in the way the boys act. They lack character; they are mere mush bags." If this is not wholly true, there is a deal of truth in it. Begin by letting the infant be nourished at the mother's breast. Make sure that he does a lot of creeping. The floor is his gymnasium, and his stunts of creeping are doing wonders for his little body. Make sure that the growing boy or girl has plenty of well-prepared and nourishing food. One State official publishes his belief that ninety per cent of crime is due to bad cooking. We are perfectly safe in asserting that a large per cent

of the perversities of good people is plainly traceable to indigestion. The child who is well instructed and trained in the care of his body is well started on the road to the highest moral worth and use. But he who is permitted to grow up with the idea that any attention to the body is a waste of time; that there is no use of bothering, the body will take care of itself; who avoids cleanliness as much as he dares; does not know the use of a toothbrush; eats and drinks what he pleases and as much as he can contain; develops by exercise only the muscles in common use; never thinks of learning to breathe properly; in short, heedlessly neglects and abuses that most useful servant, the body—such a boy or girl is handicapped from the start. For such a one a religious life and character may be possible, but not the highest, finest grade of life and character and the most effective for service. Mr. J. G. Legge, director of education, Liverpool, England, says, "Religion implies the care of the body and the mind as well as that of the soul, and it may be doubted whether in many a case admitted to a reformatory school the spiritual elements of religion have any influence whatever until the body has been disciplined, the mind scoured, and some basis of morality thus established." As a

French writer of the seventeenth century remarked, "a wrong turn given to the body in youth is often in after life a great hindrance to piety."

The Mental Equipment

It will make a marked difference in the religious life and character of the child, and a difference that will become more and more apparent as the child grows up and takes his place in church and society, whether his mental powers have or have not been properly developed and trained. It is plainly evident that many moral failures, both in children and in grown-up people, are due rather to mental deficiencies than to bad intentions. How frequent the excuse, He means well but he is ignorant, he doesn't know any better; or, He makes many mistakes, for he has such poor judgment; or, We must needs excuse him, for he has such a poor memory, or is so naturally credulous, or, on the other hand, so naturally suspicious; or, His imagination, being untrained, runs away with him, makes him flighty and unstable, or makes him moody and complaining, or it is so weak that he cannot put himself in another's place, and therefore he is uncharitable, ungenerous, unforgiving! All these defects might have been prevented or remedied

if taken in hand intelligently in childhood. There is, for instance, no excuse for ignorance. That a child is dull is no excuse whatever. If a child is dull, it only requires patience and more attention. Never despair of the dull child. Dr. Dickinson, in "Your Boy," gives a long list of brilliant men who were slow, dull fellows in their boyhood. Every name in the list is that of a very distinguished man; such soldiers as Wellington, Lord Clive, Grant, and Stonewall Jackson; such students and authors as Darwin, Huxley, Lyell, Humboldt, Davy; such men of letters as Goldsmith, "a stupid heavy blockhead," Swift, Irving, Anthony Trollope; poets like Byron and James Russell Lowell; and a musical genius like Wagner, not to mention others.

Good judgment, good practical sense, is often found invaluable in connection with religious character. How sadly marred are the lives of many good people by the lack of good sense they exhibit! How unstable, how useless for Christian service! How burdensome and how full of mischief are their frequent, stupid blunderings! There is no need of this. Good judgment is acquirable. The best way to train a child for good, practical sense is to throw him on his own responsibility, where he must think for himself

and use all the sense he has. Good sense grows by use just as any other power does. The unfailing good judgment of the late Alice Freeman Palmer, that helped her in many difficulties, and brought her at length to a distinguished position of leadership, began its development in earliest childhood, when at two years she was made responsible for certain parts of the day's work, and at five was taking most of the charge of the younger children. Give the children an opportunity to cultivate sense by being obliged to use sense.

A tendency to be suspicious is a bad trait to be connected with the religious life. It spoils many a Christian man's influence, and foments discord. Where does it begin? It begins when the parent gives the child a reason to suspect his sincerity. It is astonishing how thoughtlessly parents trifle with the unquestioning confidence natural to a child. This precious, beautiful faith faculty of the little child is so indispensable in the building of religious life and character that it would be an unpardonable sin to spoil it. The child is naturally a born believer, but many parents are rapidly making skeptics of their little ones.

Again, what mischief do bad memories work!

One of the best-hearted of Christian men had such a poor memory he could hardly be trusted to keep an appointment or to pay a bill. He kept his friends busy apologizing for him. Alas for the poor child who cannot remember! How often he comes with the childish excuse, "I forgot, mamma, I did, honest"! Now, a good memory is so easily cultivated that it is almost criminal for parents to allow a child to grow up without it. Persistent practice will develop memory astonishingly. Some children had good sport in running past store windows and then telling what they remembered seeing. It was an excellent practice. But there are several varieties of memory. There is a memory that can retain all the incidents of business or social life for a day, or for many days, but cannot hold in mind one short text of Scripture; or a memory that can retain whole chapters of the Bible, but fails badly when it comes to items of obligation. A good memory is an all-round memory. A good-sizable "forgettery" is also to be trained, and will be found invaluable. Some things are to be instantly expelled from thought and memory, and lost forever—personal injuries for instance, unkind things said about one, scandalous things said about others, all evil sights and

sounds and incidents that preserved in memory would be a rankling poison to the soul. A child trained to remember what he should remember and to forget what he should forget is finely equipped for growth in holy character.

Perhaps the most important mental quality for the building of a right life and character is a well-developed and well-trained imagination. Dr. G. Stanley Hall remarks that "the imagination is one of the most potent of all human faculties," and adds: "Some high authorities have lately urged that if this faculty were well trained, all the rest would almost take care of itself." He whose imagination is developed and trained sees more than ordinary people and understands better. He sees beauty and meaning where others see nothing. He hears sermons in running brooks, feels the invisible, has visions and revelations of truth where others see and hear naught. One very important thing is that he can see the image before him, and hold it clear and distinct as others cannot, of what he is called of God to be, what he may be, and what he ought to be. In other words, he is an idealist who has seen as Moses did the pattern in the mount by which he is to build. This is extremely important, for without this clear and abiding ideal in the mind it

is vain to hope for the highest moral and spiritual life and character.

Without this power of the trained imagination one can never put himself in another's place, and thus cannot intelligently follow the Golden Rule. "Half the cruelty in the world," said the late Dr John Fiske, "is the direct result of stupid incapacity to put one's self in another man's place." Without this power, moreover, one cannot see afar off, and feel the needs of those outside of his own narrow field.

How can this faculty of the imagination, so indispensable for the finest and best religious development, be cultivated and trained? Fortunately, nature has, as a rule, lavishly gifted children with the image-forming power. Repressed and ridiculed, as it often is until the child is ashamed, it atrophies and disappears. Wisely encouraged and trained, it takes its place among the noblest and most useful faculties of the soul. Encourage the make-believe plays, and the picturing and making of things as is done in the kindergarten. Encourage the child to think in images. Professor John Dewey says, "I believe that if nine tenths of the energy at present directed toward making the child learn certain things were spent in seeing to it that the child

was forming proper images, the work of instruction would be indefinitely facilitated." He believes in cultivating the child's image-forming power so that he will be "continually forming definite, vivid, and growing images of the various subjects with which he comes in contact in his experience." Read stories to the children. T. W. Higginson says that his mother used to read Scott's novels aloud evenings, and though he was very young he was intensely interested. Poetry may be even better than stories. Edward Everett Hale speaks of becoming familiar at two years of age with Scott's poems through hearing his mother reading them aloud evenings. These two mothers were wise in their generation, and their sons were splendid proofs of the correctness of their mothers' methods. Do mothers in these days read aloud to their children?

The Feelings and the Will

Reconstructing the feelings, developing and nourishing those that are weak, repressing the overstrong, eliminating the bad, and securing a right proportion and balance among all, is a very important part of a religious education. "Feeling," says Patterson DuBois, "is the fundamental constituent of character." Thought runs before

and prepares the way, but without feeling there is no moral progress. Feeling and the will are the motor of the soul. The aeroplane that undertakes to fly with a defective motor is likely to meet disaster. So would a human soul. The evidence for this is overwhelming. Get the weakness, the perversity, the disharmony, and the fatal crookedness out of the feelings and the will before undertaking the race with time.

The capacity of the human soul for feeling is something wonderful. One man has made a list of one hundred and eight different feelings that have been named. As many more are unnamed; and these all are continually intermixing with each other, producing kaleidoscopic variations and tangles of feeling beyond all human power to understand. As the feelings are, so will the life and character be, therefore the need of a careful reconstruction of the feelings for a good foundation for a religious life. This can be done, for it has been done repeatedly. How can we do it?

First of all, brute force is out of place here. No authority on earth, however exercised, can directly reach these deep springs of life. "The feelings and sentiments," says Professor Dewey, "are the most sacred and mysterious part of the

individual, and should be approached and influenced indirectly." Suppose, for instance, that there is a lack of a feeling of self-respect; the child doesn't care how he looks, how he stands in his studies, or how he is regarded by older people. He is a moral slouch. He is a fair candidate for a hobo. Will you beat him? It has no effect. He is beyond shame; he doesn't care what you do. But he can be reached, for many of just his sort have been reached and saved. Always there is a weak spot somewhere in his armor. There are some things he does care for; and it is for us to find out what they are, then we can reach him, for all the feelings of the soul are closely linked together. Wisely cultivate what feelings of regard he has, and we shall soon find these feelings of regard, of self-respect, spreading and at length filling his whole life.

Here is another instance of the don't-care spirit quite different from the foregoing. The child is abnormally listless, taking little or no interest in anything. Shall we take the whip? It may be some physical trouble. In that case the whip would be simple cruelty. Better look first carefully after the bodily conditions. With the listless children of the city tenement blocks miracles have been worked by giving them a few days in

the country, in touch with God's great out-of-doors, with pure air to breathe and plenty of good food.

There are whole nests, whole rookeries, of bad feelings that may be dislodged and cleared out of the soul by a right atmosphere in the home. Right feelings are wonderfully contagious; so are bad ones, for that matter, weight of character giving prevalence to the one or the other. The child naturally follows the parent, and a bright, cheery, generous whole-heartedness prevalent in the home will easily expel the demons of ill-nature, discontent, gloominess, anger, hate, revenge, and the like.

The child can help himself. Outward action has a reflex influence on the state of the mind. If we act right, we shall soon begin to feel right. Being kind begets in us kindly feelings, acting courageously begets courage, conducting one's self reverently tends to beget reverence, right conduct toward another begets a right feeling toward that other, etc.

The will is the servant of the mind, the man of all work, ready to execute the highest purposes or to stoop to the most menial offices. Several qualities are required in a good servant. He should be prompt for one thing. A weak, halt-

ing will goes far toward spoiling an otherwise fair character. There may be an abundance of good intention with a trifling amount of good result. There was a failure to strike when the iron was hot. What good we might have done, what mistakes we might have avoided, but for this shambling, delaying, hesitating will of ours! Can we not bring up our children to decide quickly and act promptly? Moreover, we want our servant to be strong, able to execute every order. Has the boy a strong will of his own? Thank God. There is now a chance for him to amount to something. Train it well and it will be his safety in the evil day. Train it, but do not break it. Anybody can drive a well-broken colt, but we do not want our boy's will so broken that anybody and everybody can manage him. We do not want him falling into the hands of evil-minded men. We want him to have a mind of his own, and a strong will of his own, not only that he may resist temptation, but that he may war a good warfare against evil, that he may rescue the weak and the tempted, that he may stand up strong and true for righteousness, and that he may do and endure as God's will may lead.

Of course a strong will may become too inflexible. One may become as stubborn as a mule,

and thus his Christian character is marred and his usefulness spoiled. That is why the will should be taken in hand early and trained to bend when it ought to bend and be inflexible only when it ought to be inflexible. Sometimes strong wills become perverse and thus furnish to parent and teacher some of the hardest of problems. Why a child, who is by no means thoroughly bad, perhaps better in some ways than the average, should act so very strangely at times is a hard puzzle. It brings parents and teachers into perplexity and despair. A Sunday school teacher in England gathered a class of poor, ragged boys from the street. Each was given a new suit of clothes. In a Sunday or two one of the boys failed to appear. Being hunted up, it was found that he had worn his new clothes every day until they were spoiled. Again he was persuaded to come, and another new suit was given him. He did exactly as he did before, and the superintendent of the school and the teacher were puzzled and in despair. As the result proved, he was the best boy material in the class, but his perversity made him seem the worst. They had the patience to try him again, and the boy was saved to become one of the world's greatest missionaries.

CHAPTER X

STAGES OF GROWTH

THERE are several more or less clearly marked stages of growth from birth to maturity. Each stage of growth presents its own peculiar problems, opportunities, and dangers, which cannot be forgotten or ignored with impunity. If, for instance, we fail to use the golden opportunities of infancy, they are lost forever; henceforth our work will be under serious disadvantages. The stages of growth may be arranged as follows: Early infancy; early, middle, and later childhood; early, middle, and later adolescence. The first stage would then be the first three or four years, the second from four to eleven or twelve, the third from eleven or twelve to completed growth.

EARLY INFANCY

For developing the religious life early infancy is by far the most important period of the entire life, yet perhaps none is more neglected. It is very nearly impossible to convince parents that, if they want their children to grow up in the love

and righteousness of God, they must begin long before the child comes to full self-consciousness. "Teach the baby to be religious! What does he know about these things?" exclaims an almost indignant mother. Now, we must confess that the baby knows very little indeed. If his religious development depended on his knowledge, we should have very little hope of it. But, fortunately, it is not a question of his knowledge but of his impressibility, and of this there can be no doubt. Early infancy is the matrix in which the life of the man takes its shape. What the moral character will be is often decided before the child can walk. There is something in the acorn that predetermines the mighty oak. Through its hundred years of growth the oak never frees itself from the law of the acorn. What the man will be is also largely determined even before his birth. In the microscopically minute embryo there is no apparent difference between man, rat, or elephant, but the determining factor is there that decides for man, and often for the moral kind of a man. The time to reshape the predetermining elements in the moral life of man is as early as possible, that is, before birth and immediately after birth. "More can be done," says Dr. Bushnell, "or lost by neglect of doing,

in the first three years of a child's life than in all the years of his discipline afterward." Voltaire said that the foundations of his infidelity were laid before he was five years old. Yet many parents insist that a distinctively religious education should be postponed to "a suitable age, when the child can understand it better."

We may wait for what may seem a more convenient season, but the forces of evil are not waiting. We forget that the child's nature is bound to develop whether we try to control it or not; and that without wise direction and care much of evil is sure to intermingle. Besides this, the child's understanding is greatly underrated. Of this we will speak a little later.

Religion is love. "Thou shalt love" is the commandment; and "Love is the fulfilling of the law," says the apostle. Can a baby love? "Thou shalt love thy father and thy mother" is part of our religious obligation. Can a baby do this? When the yearning mother heart brooding over the little form that shrines a new soul catches the first gleam of a responsive love religious development has begun, for love is born. It only needs to expand unchecked until all and the Father of all are included, and love is made perfect. There must be a beginning or perfection will never be

reached. Before a child can love God, whom he hath not seen, he must love his mother, whom he does see. How feeble is the beginning! But despise it not. Think how swiftly it will develop! This beginning is safe and sure; it is nature and cannot be hindered. It is in its aftergrowth through the days and years that it meets its dangers. Then it may be hurt, spoiled, dwarfed, perverted, starved to death, or turned to bitterness and revenge. Love is nourished only by love and grows strong only by loving.

If mother love becomes wearied, and tenderness turns to impatience, fretting, scolding, or neglect, then the heart of the little one becomes discouraged and love is lost. But if the beautiful little plant of love is tenderly cared for, it will grow amazingly, and fill heaven and earth with its fragrance. It will not be a long step from the love of father and mother to the love of the Father in heaven. As the child's intelligence expands, and his circle of acquaintances begins to enlarge, tell him reverently of his heavenly Father; teach him to pray. With the child's unspoiled gifts of imagination and faith his heavenly Father will soon be as real to him as is his earthly father. How much will he know of God? Nothing in a theological sense, yet enough to fill his soul with

reverence, love, and trust. What kind of a being will he suppose God to be? If he thinks of him as a Father in heaven like unto his father on earth, it will suffice. Everybody's ideas of God are more or less conventional and likely to be pretty anthropomorphic. His ideas of God's character will depend on your instruction. If, for instance, you lie to the child and tell him that God does not love naughty children, the child will believe you, and a mischievous barrier will be set up between the child and his heavenly Father. Soon will the child be folding his little hands in reverence while his father returns thanks at the table; soon he will say his own "Now I lay me down to sleep"; soon he will be listening intently to the new old story of Jesus and his love; soon his own lips will be warbling snatches of Christian song. Why, then, here are the elements of a true religious life—love, reverence, prayer, trust, and joy and praise. Surely Jesus was right —why have we ever doubted it?—when he said, "Of such is the kingdom of God."

But we are not forgetting that there is another side to love, another element in religion, that of righteousness. This also begins to develop in early infancy. Scarcely has baby discovered his hands and begun to stretch them forth to every-

thing reachable when the voice of the law is heard. "No, no," cries mamma, "baby mustn't touch! Baby mustn't have that! Baby mustn't put that in his mouth!" A true son of the primal pair in Eden, he recks not to eat of the forbidden fruit, and straightway becomes like the gods, knowing good and evil. In bitterness of soul he cries out under the penalty of broken law, or, on the other hand, laughs to see his mother's approving smile when he does right. He is learning fast to distinguish the right and the wrong, to choose the one and turn from the other. As far as he does this, and walks in the light as it dawns upon him, why is he not morally good? Can any of us do any better? But he forgets so often, and is so full of mistakes and failures. Is it not so with us? He must try, try again just as we do, and, God's grace helping, both he and we may yet be established in righteousness.

The great fault of parents is to overlook the importance of the small things that are daily transforming the moral and spiritual life of the little one. "Baby's faults," for instance, "are too trifling to be noticed; they only make him all the more cunning, and they are so amusing." While we are busy having our good times with our little pet, and laughing at his faults because

they are so amusing, his character is being decided for life. We wake up at last to find it is too late. "While thy servant was busy here and there he [the prisoner] was gone." As the author of "The Unfolding Life" puts it, "'We must soon be careful what we do before the baby,' says the mother who half grasps the connection between impression and character-building, not realizing that the work is already far under way, that the foundations are in." Already the twig is bent, and the way the tree will be inclined is already determined. "Believe it now," says Margaret Meredith, "if you possibly can convince yourself deeply of it, and act upon it. Never feel again that nobody sees your tantrum or your deceit or your injustice because no one is present but very little folks. You have in them the most awe-inspiring audience possible to have. If you are their mother, you are using your terrible responsibility to ruin them fast, to mold them into bad men and women. And when a few years or months later you try to teach them the lessons of God and righteousness, you will have, if you have allowed yourself or others to put before them year in and year out—the long years of early childhood—these ungodly wicked lessons, you will have to reform their poor little

injured characters, just as an almost hopeless rogue in a rescue mission has to be reformed, and in possibly no less degree.

"Though not well read in 'child-study,' I have heard or read a good deal about it, and may venture, I think without being ridiculous, to speak of one thing that struck me most in the whole science; that is the truth, proved by long experiment, that the heart (not the head) is impressed and rapidly shaped for life during the first four years of childhood. This, noticed by Christian mothers and acted upon, cannot but save multitudes of souls—to know that the cross words and acts indulged in and around the cradle are not only taken in by the babe but made forthwith a part of its very being, forming its character, planting the undying seeds from which that whole long eternal life is to grow, is now growing."

Childhood

Childhood, the period between early infancy and adolescence, from three or four to eleven or twelve, has three, if not four, distinct stages of growth. From three to five there is often a marked moral and spiritual advance; there is a surprising clearness in the child's moral intuitions, and often a definite and earnest seeking

unto God. Dr. Koons says of this period: "Self-consciousness then becomes a practical factor; intelligence has arisen, and a clearer perception of things in general marks this period of life. A change in the child's religious career naturally accompanies these physical and mental changes." The reader will recall Bishop Hedding's early experience. When three years of age his mother taught him the principles of religion, and he then "felt the fear of God and began the practice of secret prayer."

The Rev. E. Payson Hammond gives several interesting incidents of the conversion of children at the age of four, revealing a clear understanding by the children of their spiritual needs and of God's power to help, and showing also a persistency of purpose in seeking God which nothing could discourage. One little four-year-old boy was particularly impressed by the hymn, "Now I have found a friend, Jesus is mine." In the home many hymns were being sung in which he joined until this hymn was selected, then his lips were closed. "Please, mamma," he said, "don't sing that hymn; Jesus is not mine yet." When his father came home they told him what Willie had said, but he replied: "Willie is too young to understand about these things. After

tea we will sing some more hymns and bring in the one he objected to." They did so. Willie again remonstrated, exclaiming, "Mamma, didn't I ask you not to sing that hymn? Jesus is not mine yet, and I can't sing it." The father was surprised, but said nothing. Next morning Willie did not come down to breakfast. After waiting for him some time, his father went up stairs and found the boy kneeling by his bedside engaged in prayer. Later he asked his father when the next children's meeting would be held, and said, "Won't you ask them to pray for me that the Holy Spirit may go up and down in my heart so that I can sing with the rest, 'Jesus is mine'?" At the next meeting Willie was present and entered into conscious friendship with Jesus, and from that time he lived a consistent Christian life. In another meeting for children a lady found in the inquiry room a boy of five. She found he was not a seeker but already a Christian. On inquiring how long he had loved the Saviour, his quick reply was, "O, I have loved him since I was a little boy." "But," said the lady, "you are only a little boy now." She was about to further remonstrate with him when a man who had been looking on said: "That is my boy. He has been a Christian for at least two

years, and about the best Christian too we have in the home."

That children from three to five years of age who have had proper religious nurture may have inward struggles and victories as meaningful for them as similar struggles and victories are for older people is plain to every close observer. In his charming book, "Beckonings from Little Hands," Dr. Patterson DuBois tells of such a conflict in his shy and reticent little boy, then nearly five. The whole incident is wonderfully instructive. In a confidential bed-time talk the father had spoken of our dependence on God's help in our endeavors to do right, and suggested to the boy that he should say to God in his prayer, "Help me to do right." But the boy could not say it. It was easy enough to say, "Now I lay me," but the new petition he could not offer. "Very well," said the father, "if you can't say it, you had better rise," and when the boy did not rise the father attempted to lift him to his feet. As he did so he caught sight of the little face and saw that there was a desperate struggle going on within. The boy would not rise, neither could he force himself to say the words which he felt in his soul that he ought to say. Thus the conflict hung undecided for some time. At last, with a

desperate effort, the words came from his lips. The boy had won a notable victory over himself. Out of such struggles and triumphs comes high and holy character.

There was a lesson also for the father. It is a wise parent that knows when to stand out of the child's way. We seem sometimes to think we know it all, and that the child knows next to nothing, while all the time his instincts are leading him more safely than any advice we could give. How true the boy held himself, even when the father had given up! Possibly some fathers would have forced the boy to say the words, and then the boy would have hated them ever after. How often we think it is stubbornness when the child fails through sheer inability to master himself!

We are delaying on this initial stage of childhood because of its great importance and because its importance is so commonly underrated. With wisdom more can be done for the child religiously between three and five than in any other period of his growth except the first three years. "When a child is five years old," says Dr. Farrar, "you have done half that you ever can do to influence him religiously." The powers of evil understand the situation. A wise teacher of boys in England

says: "I have had fourteen years of experience in dealing with boys. I cannot give statistics for what I say, but my experience of boy life will give some credence to my statement that an appalling number of children are ruined for the formation of character before they are five years old."

One caution is needed. Deal gently with these tender little souls. Don't push them too hard. Neither drive them, nor even coax them too much. Surround them with a religious atmosphere and let it work in. Whatever is needed to be said let it be said suggestively. Be patient with their mistakes, for they are yet neither wise nor strong.

In the next two or three years, from five or six to eight, the child's life becomes decidedly broader. He roams farther from the home limits, and meets other persons, old and young, each of whom will contribute something to the forming character. The school age arrives and the child spends hours away from home daily under such influences as he may chance to meet. It is naturally a time of anxiety for the parent, anxiety as when a new ship puts forth to sea. Will the untried vessel stand the strain? Was her keel well laid? Are her timbers strong? Is there any defect in the design or fault in the construction?

How anxiously the nation watched the Oregon in her famous passage from the west coast around the South American continent to reënforce the Atlantic fleet in the war with Spain! Thanks to her faithful builders, all went well. So when the little one goes to meet the untried experiences of life outside the safe harbor of home, how many anxious thoughts and prayers fill the mother's heart! Has she builded well? Have no faults of her own passed into the child's character to make it weak when put to the proof? Or will her teaching, training, and example hold like a safe anchor when the breakers roar? If the home has done its work well, the probabilities are all for the child's safety. Evil will be met, but it will be overcome; wrong suggestions and wrong examples will be resisted; wrong teaching will be questioned and referred to the home authorities. But if the home has failed, there is abundant reason to fear?

Earlier childhood is a time of rapid moral development, in the right or the wrong direction as the case may be, a much more rapid development than is generally supposed. Appearances are deceitful. The child's countenance has not yet lost its native look of innocence, and tells no tales of the inroads of evil, for it takes years for

sin to stamp its signature on the human features. A Sunday school teacher with a class of small boys declared that they were "too young to talk religion to." "Suppose you find out how many of your class swear, and how long they have been doing it," was the quiet response. "Nonsense! Those little fellows!" cried the young teacher. But she investigated, and was astonished to find, as she reported the following Sabbath: "Every one of my scholars knows how to swear, and most of them have been using bad language since they were five. It is time for me to talk religion to them all." Thousands of parents are blinded in like manner. They cannot, they will not, believe their own to be other than the little angels they seem to be.

It is just about as easy to make a mistake in the opposite direction, and ignore or distrust the moral and spiritual abilities of young children. The sense of moral and spiritual truth is often likely to be singularly clear and strong at this age, but, because "it is only a child," and the child apparently a little playful animal whose attention can hardly be fixed for five minutes, few people appreciate the fact as they should. The writer well remembers how strongly he was convinced at the age of seven that he ought to

make a public confession of Christ. But in those days no one expected a child so young to do such a thing, nor would it have been regarded as of any consequence if he did it. Times have changed since that day, but the time is yet far distant when it will be expected in the church generally that confession of discipleship should be made by children of six or seven. Child-religion is as yet little understood, and therefore receives less confidence than it deserves. There is often more moral fiber in children of six or seven than in some adults. Said one old man: "I have fought liquor for seventy years. I was but seven years old when I first set my face against it."

A great opportunity comes to parents in earlier childhood through the inquisitiveness of the children. Unfortunately, too many regard the endless questioning of the child as an almost intolerable trial. To be sure, the little questioner never stops to think whether his mother is busy or not; he wants to know something, and know it right now. Perhaps also he asks sometimes just for the pleasure of it. But the management of this childish inquisitiveness is in the hands of the parent, and the parent can make much or little of it just as he is disposed. Of course the right way is to make as much of it as possible.

Few appreciate as they should the pathetic eagerness of the child in these early years to understand. How intently they listen! "I can remember," says President Lincoln, "going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down and trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their to me dark sayings." Of course Abraham Lincoln was rather an uncommon boy, but all children have something like his insatiable desire to understand, and wise is the parent who knows how to make the most of it.

Later childhood, from eight to eleven or twelve, finds the boys and girls growing rapidly in wisdom and stature, and as rapidly becoming conscious of their self-sufficiency. They are not asking quite so many questions now; they are watching closely and making investigations and forming their own judgments. They are spending more time away from home, self-guided and self-controlled. This growing self-sufficiency and independence is very desirable, but it introduces new dangers and increases parental solicitude. Now becomes apparent the value of careful work in the earlier years. The freer life of the boy outside the immediate influence and con-

trol of the home, which is now unavoidable, will make the mother regret the misimproved opportunities of the years when she had him under constant oversight in the home. It is impossible to do at nine or ten what could have been so easily done at the beginning. It is too late now for the earlier methods, but not too late to save the boy if we take the right course. Indeed, from eight to twelve is a much better time to awaken and develop the religious life than will ever come again. But our methods must change. In the beginning we were dealing with a soul not yet arrived at self-consciousness; now we have to approach a soul with a high degree of moral and spiritual sense, of considerable experience, knowledge, and capability of reasoning and deciding for himself. We can appeal to him, in short, very much as we would appeal to an adult, convincing, persuading, urging, being careful only not to bring too strong pressure to bear, lest the child's individual choice be overruled. Every step he takes in religion should be taken from no lower motive than his own sense of right and duty. The time when the parent's will was supreme is past; now and henceforth the child must choose for himself whether he will be a worshiper of God or not. If he has been wisely trained

religiously, his choice is already made; if the early training has been deficient, the probabilities are against his ever making a free choice of God. But there is a possibility left which by wisdom and God's grace may be turned into glorious certainty.

From this time forward special efforts will be required to make home the most attractive spot on earth. While it is proper for the child to enlarge his interests beyond the home, it will not be well if the home stands second in any respect. Whatever the outside attractions and pleasures, the boys and girls should come back home with the feeling that, after all, there is no other place quite so good. "I cannot remember a time in my own boyhood," says Dr. Charles M. Sheldon, "when there was any place either in country or city which had a greater 'pulling' power in the way of genuine attraction than my own home. I am sure we could never boast of any superfluity of riches. We lived in a log house of two rooms for several years. We had what would be called the necessities of life, but beyond that a very small margin. We were all working people. The father worked in the field, the mother worked in the kitchen, and the boys in both places; and I cannot recall a single condition in the way of

counter attraction which at any time rivaled in our thought the attraction of the home."

The tastes and interests of the boys and girls must be studied, and these will afford hints by which the home may be made to retain its old attractiveness undiminished. Dr. Sheldon gives a few hints in this direction as follows: "In this connection much can be done by true fathers and mothers in observing the natural tastes, habits, and inclinations of their children. If a boy takes to reading, along that track may be his ultimate salvation. If he takes to a musical instrument, it is not difficult to take advantage of that fact. If he is a natural scientist, that is a hint as to the things that will interest him as he develops. Many a man has lost his boy by being willing to spend for his own club life fifty to a hundred dollars a year, and being unwilling to give his boy a chemical laboratory, or start him out to study an electric machine fixed up in the basement or attic. It would not be exaggeration to say that many men have lost their boys by letting them wander on the streets nights. They are filling the vaudevilles, and are seeking excitement and interest anywhere except at home, simply because father or mother has failed to provide for them in the home circle what would have been perfectly easy

and comparatively cheap if the father and mother had been willing to study the boy as hard as they study their own selfish inclinations."

Here is an inside view of another Christian home both instructive and suggestive, the early home of the evangelist Charles M. Alexander. This home was also in a log house, a log house among the hills of Tennessee. "My father," says Mr. Alexander, "was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. My mother was a consecrated woman, full of deep piety with a strong practical strain. The only papers we took were religious ones, and in the evening we would all gather around the fireside and mother would read aloud from them. Also on stormy and rainy days mother would read aloud to us children. She loved most to read sermons, and Moody's sermons were our favorites. Sometimes when she had read other sermons she would say, 'Well, now, my children, these are very good, but I'll read you some more of Mr. Moody's. He goes right to our heart, and he bases what he says on the Word of God.' I remember how we would all break down and cry over some of his stories. Some of the most potent influences in molding my life and sweetening it were the long talks with my mother on rainy days. While the rain was beat-

ing upon the roof, and the wind was howling in the trees outside, she would tell me the stories of the chief Bible characters, and point out the lessons to be derived from them. She was full of sympathy for the poor, and was easily touched by the misery of others. The chief books in our home were religious, for my father had a penchant for purchasing portions of ministers' libraries, and my early reading was almost entirely religious." Mr. Alexander says further that both his father and mother were singers, and that "almost as soon as I was able to read anything my father taught me to read music." His father bought the Moody and Sankey books as they came out, and hand in hand father and son sang together the new gospel songs. Sunday afternoons the neighbors came from far and near to hear and to learn the wonderfully inspiring hymns and music.

In the period of later childhood, from eight to twelve, several characteristics appear that may be turned to good use. One is the remarkable ability to memorize Scripture and poetry. This generally reaches its highest point between eight and twelve, as a rule gradually decreasing after this period. This, then, is the time to store the mind with truth-forms of all sorts, especially hymns,

maxims, and Scripture. Whether the church Catechism should be included is a question. This is truth in detached nuggets, and some of it quite beyond the comprehension of young boys and girls. These two facts make the Catechism hard to learn. Probably it would be better to take it up some years later. But no one can doubt the value of memorizing Scripture. "The Bible passages that I learned when a child I remember," says many an adult, "but what I learn now is soon forgotten." In the older generation, when it was the custom in Sunday schools to memorize Scripture, some of the accomplishments of the boys and girls in this line were amazing. The now venerable Miss Fanny J. Crosby says, "When I was very young a dear, good lady undertook to teach the little blind girl something of the Bible, and so readily did I learn that at nine I could recite all of the Gospels and several of the other New Testament books." John Muir says that at eleven years of age he could repeat the whole of the New Testament and about two thirds of the Old Testament. He says that was the way they did in his day. They thrashed into the child the Catechism, the Bible, and Milton, and much of it was never forgotten. Many others, whose memory was less remarkable

than John Muir's or Fanny Crosby's, can testify to the facility with which they could commit to memory in childhood whatever they chose; and can repeat long Scripture passages which they learned in their early years, while at the present it is almost impossible to remember a single text. Here, then, is a golden opportunity for parents that will pass swiftly and never return.

Quite prominent in this period is the tendency to hero-worship. It is a fortunate thing for the boy when his own father is a hero of the right sort in the eyes of his son. Some of us have had fathers every way worthy. Others have fastened upon any sort of character that happened to appear having the daring and the accomplishments to attract a boy. What could be better for a hero-loving boy than familiarity with the grand men of history who lived to some high purpose, held true to their noble aims, overcame all that hindered, and blessed the world in accomplishing splendid deeds, as a Washington, a Lincoln, and others? Will boys follow the life story of such men? Some would do so with pleasure. Professor Coe says the only Sunday school book he remembers was the "Life of Charles Goodyear," the inventor. It seems to be quite a common mistake to think that boys want nothing but stories.

Before the close of this period the independent personality begins to lose itself at times in the wider personality of the "gang," the baseball nine, or some other boyish association. This is the way society begins. It is rather a trying time for the parent, but it is so natural and has so many ultimate advantages that we cannot afford to discourage it. Out of the associations of childhood comes organized society, in some sense comes the church with its grand possibilities for human uplifting. Some have thought that the "sacrifice play" of the ball game has some relation to the self-sacrifice required by society and the church. But there are some dangers. The chosen gang may be a vicious gang. The conscience of the association is almost sure to fall below that of the individual. On the other hand, there are not a few instances where the individual conscience has not only not dropped to the average but has lifted the average to its level. The bed is still shown, and shown with pride, where Arthur, of "Tom Brown's School Days," knelt to say his bedtime prayer in the presence of his jeering roommates. "For a few nights there was a sneer or a laugh when he knelt down, but this passed off soon, and one by one all the other boys but three or four followed the lead."

Now is the time when the boy or girl needs a wise and confidential friend and counselor; and if such a one is found in mother or father, it will be well. In speaking of the "Boy and His Parents" Priscilla Wakefield says: "A boy's heart is full and overflowing. He needs some one who will listen to his confidences. If he is repelled and finds himself alone, he becomes fretful, indolent, or worse. His affairs are not 'Nonsense.' A good mother never says, 'Run away; I am busy.' She listens, encourages. Important discoveries may be made in these outpourings. She gives sympathy, enters into his feelings, sees things from his standpoint. If he tells of something that proves that he is at fault, she does not reprimand him at the time because this would check further confidences. She gives attention quietly, tells him she is glad he has confided in her, and that she will talk of it again with him."

It is time also that the boy or girl should be allowed to make public confession of Christ and become enrolled among the communicants of his church, if this has not been done already. Too many parents thoughtlessly discourage early confessions of faith. If the child's religious life has been a normal one, beginning with the beginning

of his earthly life and developing under wise supervision from year to year, he is one of the safest of candidates for church membership. Much safer is he than many converted in adult years. Large numbers of children are lost to the church because both church and home have failed to encourage early confession of faith and church membership. The question was put to a large congregation, "How many remember to have had religious impressions before ten years of age?" and every person in the house rose. Of course religious impressions are valuable only as they are made use of; as the church, the parent, and the child make use of them in developing a practical Christian life. But the test of the congregation shows what the possibilities are. Every child of a Christian home, with many others not so highly favored, ought to be expected to avow Christ and be enrolled as a full member of the household of faith long before the age of ten. If this were the general expectation, the child would of his own accord desire it and would seek to be worthy.

Adolescence

The period of adolescence begins with boys at about twelve, with girls somewhat earlier, and

covers the succeeding ten or twelve years. It is the transition period between childhood and maturity. Three stages are commonly distinguished in adolescence; early, middle, and later adolescence. Entrance upon the adolescent period is marked by a fast-growing sense of self-sufficiency and of responsibility for oneself, involving an increasing independence of home. This is proper enough, but it ought not to mean alienation from the home, and will not if the home is anything near what it ought to be.

The development of the sexual powers characteristic of adolescence introduces a new element of danger. Not that it is in itself a danger; the conditions of domestic and social life make a danger of it. Sedentary habits, highly seasoned food, the promiscuous mingling of children in the schools, evil suggestions by older people are some of the inevitable sources of mischief. Without these elements of our civilization the sexes would grow together to maturity in undisturbed innocency. We are led by the testimony of travelers to believe that such is the fact among primitive peoples. But the case is far different with us. The half-grown boy is provided with highly seasoned food, drinks tea or coffee, perhaps beer, smokes a cigarette, hears daily the vile talk and

vile stories men like to bandy with each other, looks on the suggestive advertisements of vaudeville or theater, if he does not attend those places, and finds in his school associations a heritage of evil habit passed down from one grade to another. What may we expect? Professor Edwin A. Kirkpatrick asserts that "nine tenths of the best boys" have fallen into impure habits, according to "recent studies." The remedy proposed is enlightenment; and some have gone so far as to attempt to give the enlightenment supposed to be needed *publicly*. Such methods of enlightenment are mischievous. A few words of warning given privately would sometimes do good. But fixed habits of right doing as in the sight of God always will do more than anything. The best possible preparation for the new experiences and temptations that come in with adolescence is a moral and spiritual life trained to right principles from earliest infancy. If the first twelve years have been well improved, the next twelve years are practically safe. Entering upon this period with high moral and spiritual development, with high ideals, habits of self-control, and God's love in the heart, and with a life trained to prayer, is vastly different from approaching it after twelve years of neglect.

Early adolescence is a period of intense activity. "The boy of thirteen," says Professor Pattee, "is a dynamo fairly spluttering with pent-up possibilities. Ten or twelve boys together make a veritable power house." They want to make discoveries, do stunts, make something, do something, dare something, and overcome something. They keep up an incessant racket and do a lot of mischief heedlessly without malice aforethought. People are naturally offended with such boisterous roughness, and the boys get a bad name; deservedly too if they do not control themselves when occasion makes self-control a duty. From the moral standpoint incessant activity is the boy's safety. To bottle him up tight would be like putting new wine into old wine skins. Give him a chance to let himself out; he will be the better for it. Somebody will be mean enough to suggest that if the boy wants to stretch his muscles there is plenty of work for him to do, forgetting that it is not the outer man only but much more the inward man that needs the free and joysome exercise such as all sorts of boyish plays and enterprises afford. It is not to be understood that the work element is to be excluded, for that also has its value, but simply that the margin for play should not be too much encroached upon.

With the coming of adolescence fathers and mothers must quicken their pace or they will fall behind and lose the companionship of their boys and girls. "It is the very rare mother," says Lilburn Merrill, "who has a vital and controlling influence in her boy's life after he becomes twelve or fourteen years of age. His love continues just as intense, but the companionship becomes less intimate." "How is it," laments one mother, "that I have lost my boy?" The lad was mother's boy all right up to a certain age, then the mother lost him. As for the boy, he simply had to break away into a larger life and into other companionships; it was his nature, and he could not help it. It is just what mothers ought to expect, and they ought to be prepared for it. Your boy is not lost, anxious mother; he will come back to you, and all the more frequently if you stop lamenting and put yourself into full-hearted sympathy with his new interests. Mothers have sometimes kept abreast of their boys' studies even to the end of their college course. All could not do this, nor is it always needed. But it is always possible to keep within hailing distance at least of the boy in his ever-widening interests—in his games, work, study, friendships, plans, and ambitions. While father and mother seek thus to keep in touch and

sympathy with the fast-developing son or daughter, so as not to lose the possibility of confidential talks now and then, after all it is inevitable, and doubtless it is best, that the boy and girl should take upon themselves very largely to direct their own lives. And the wisest way very often is to simply let them alone. Nagging never does anything but harm, sarcasm and ridicule are seldom any good, too much good advice is wearisome and a waste, and personal authority and corporal punishments often arouse only irritation and antagonisms. The parent must be a skillful pilot if he would navigate safely the rock-strewn rapids of adolescence, and bring his charges unharmed down to the deeper, smoother waters. It is one great comfort that the boys and girls can never go beyond the reach of love, or of prayer, or of the mighty Holy Spirit of God.

The mother of Phillips Brooks, of whom Dr. Wayland said, "If ever there was a successful mother, she was the mother of Phillips Brooks and his splendid brother," wrote to an anxious mother as follows: "There is an age when it is not well to follow or question your boy too closely. Up to that time you may carefully instruct and direct him; you are his best friend; he is never happy unless the story of the day has been told;

you must hear about his friends, his school; all that interests him must be your interest. Suddenly these confidences cease; the affectionate son becomes reserved and silent, he seeks the intimate friendships of other lads, he goes out, he is averse to telling you how long he will be gone. He comes in and goes silently to his room. All this is a startling change to the mother, but it is also her opportunity to practice wisdom by loving and praying for and absolutely trusting her son. The faithful instruction and careful training during the earlier years the son can never forget; that is impossible. Therefore trust not only your heavenly Father but trust your son. The period of which I speak appears to me to be the one in which the boy dies and the man is born; his individuality rises up before him, and he is dazed and almost overwhelmed by the first consciousness of himself. I have always believed that it was then that the Creator was speaking with my sons, and that it was good for their souls to be left alone with him, while I, their mother, stood trembling, praying, and waiting, knowing that when the man was developed from the boy I should have my sons again, and there would be a deeper sympathy than ever between us."

We have stated frequently that religious devel-

opment begins properly with the beginning of life, and it may be so conducted that the child will never know himself to be other than the child of God. We have also spoken of a crisis favorable to a conscious choice of Christ at about five, and another very important one between seven and ten. If all these opportunities have passed unimproved, and the first conscious choice of Christ remains to be made, the three periods of adolescence will each afford a natural time of decision, when the religious nature, heretofore repressed, and choked with many upspringing worldly interests, still puts forth buds of holy impulse. These are practically the last favorable opportunities nature will offer. The years of one's life after maturity is reached are simply days of grace, and any conversion in mature life is likely to be effected only after prolonged and sometimes severe inward conflict.

Through the later years of adolescence the parent comes to take more and more the place of a companion and confidential friend. Happy for the young girl who can tell it all to mother, knowing that that great heart of love will understand and not be too quick to condemn. Many an error would thus be repaired before it caused lifelong misery. And the young fellow who can

talk with his father, sure of a sympathetic hearing and wise and helpful suggestions, is most fortunate, and most likely to hold to the ways of truth and right. At the age of sixteen there is sure to come two or three years of peculiar testing for the young Christian. Nothing will then seem to be exactly as it should be. The mind has become keen enough to see the numberless defects everywhere in evidence, but the judicial quality of mind that can see both sides and pronounce an equitable judgment has not yet been gained. For a while, therefore, the young people appear to be like anchorless ships, tossed every way at the mercy of the storms. The more frivolous will abandon themselves to their feelings and run a wild, swift course to practical infidelity, to worldly pleasures, to sin and eternal shipwreck. But the previously well trained, whose habits are fixed, and who are accustomed to find divine wisdom and strength in prayer, will pass safely through this season of storm and stress. Surely the boy or girl will be kept safe whose mother, like the mother of Phillips Brooks, stands by "trembling, praying, and waiting." Nature will also assist, for the season of stress will soon come to an end. Judgment will overtake the critical faculty, and the soul's balance will be regained,

order will come out of the chaos of emotions, and life will settle down to some fixed faith and purpose. Professor Starbuck reports that his careful investigations show that only five per cent drift permanently away during this period.

In all the years of adolescence the young Christian's safety is in sharing his own Christian life with others. Fellowship and service are as necessary to him as his daily food. Home is, of course, the primary field, and he who does not first share his Christian life with the home circle takes the wrong course. But the young people must have an increasingly wider field, and parents must not stand in their way.

When may the parent be relieved? When can he say, "My work is accomplished. I need be solicitous and watchful no more; my cares and prayers are ended"? When the young robin gets tired of the nest, and, falling out at length, flops around for a while on inexperienced wings, the mother robin stands guard against prowlers until her Robinette gets his bearings; then her parental care is ended so far as he is concerned. But do a human mother's cares ever end? Never, not while life lasts. She watches and prays for her own as long as she lives and sometimes the son or daughter is gathered into the ark of safety

in mature years because mother still prays. Strong men are stronger, wives and mothers are wiser, purer, better, because father and mother still live to give the support of an encouraging word, or of counsel, or of such prayer as only a loving parent could offer. Some will say, "How great is the burden that parents must carry!" Those who are wise will say, "What an opportunity for holy service is theirs!"

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